

THE
ROKEWOOD
TRAGEDY
A DETECTIVE STORY



BY MYRON PINKERTON

THE SPRING OF HEALTH.



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BY

MYRON PINKERTON

DETECTIVE

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

GLASGOW AND NEW YORK

1887

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THE ROKEWOOD TRAGEDY.

CHAPTER I.

AT ROKEWOOD.

“To the State of Virginia I give and bequeath all my personal property, with the exception of twenty thousand dollars, to be used as hereinafter mentioned.

“The sum of twenty thousand dollars is herein set aside to be used as a standing reward for the arrest and capture of Catherine Deane—otherwise known as Catherine Rokewood, who escaped from Wansmore Prison while under sentence of death for murder, the tenth day of September, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty—.”

It was a long, low-ceiled room, with the small, old-fashioned windowpanes and the wide-mouthed fireplace common to the houses built a century ago.

In a far corner of the room, where

the shadows seemed darkest and dreariest of all, stood a tall high-post bedstead, and a white, pinched face, worn and haggard, pressed the pillows.

“Marley,” cried the weak voice of the sick man, “I hear the tramp of horses’ feet. Has he come?”

“Not yet, sir,” answered Marley, from his seat at the head of his master’s bed. “It is not time.”

“I say it is time,” persisted the voice, which expressed anger as well as weakness in its accents. “Marley, how dare you contradict me? I tell you I heard the steps.”

“Yes, sir,” said Marley, submissively.

“Well. Then why don’t you bring him in here—the business is urgent? Fool that I have been to wait until now to make my will. Open the door.”

The old servant rose, and, going

noiselessly to the opposite side of the apartment, threw the door back upon its hinges.

“ You can see for yourself, Mr. Rokewood, that nobody is waiting to enter,” cried Marley, respectfully.

The sick man peered out from his shadowy corner into the dense darkness of the passage. “ True,” assented he, fretfully; “ he is very slow. Sit down again Marley, by my bedside, and take my hands in yours. I feel better so. Strange, isn’t it, that, unless I can feel the warm, healthy clasp of your hands on mine, my soul seems to want to play me tricks and flit away from my control ? ”

“ You are very ill, sir.”

The sick man irritably pushed away the hand that had obediently taken his own.

“ Out upon you, Marley,” said Rokewood, “ knave that you are. Is it you—you who have served me faithfully as boy and man, who now prates to me of illness ? ”

“ The doctors—— ”

“ Who cares for the doctors—curse them ! They make fat graveyards, Marley—that’s about all they are good for. In spite of what they say, I’m good for twenty years yet.

Doctors are only mortal men, and they are not infallible ; you should read what history has to say of doctors, Marley.”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ And history will tell you that when King Charles the Second was taken a little ailing his attendants called in fourteen doctors to prescribe for him ; and when they had deliberated on the King’s case they contradicted each other and themselves. Some thought the King epileptic, some thought him *apoplectic*, and then it was determined to call his disease a fever, and administer doses of bark. One only hit the truth, and he ran to the Queen and told her his brethren would kill the King. Go to Macaulay’s history for this statement, Marley ; you’ll find it there.”

“ And did the King die ? ” asked the servant, gently smoothing the thin fingers he had again taken in his hand.

Rokewood burst into a feverish laugh.

“ Die ? ” he gasped, recovering himself. “ I should say so ; how could he help it, with fourteen doctors about him, all determined to have their way with him ? Fourteen men against one man is an unfair ad-

vantage, and he had to die. It was a case of compulsion, and he died to get rid of them. Don't forget that, whatever else you forget ; for King Charles the Second certainly died to get rid of the doctors. But hark ! What is that ? ”

There was no sound save that of the wind as it swept up over the house-top and went wailing down the long pine avenue leading from the house to the road.

“ It was nothing, sir, only the wind,” said the serving-man, soothingly.

“ Nothing ? ” whispered Rokewood, hoarsely.

“ Only the wind, sir.”

“ Strange,” muttered the sick man. “ I could have sworn, Marley, that I heard Catherine’s shriek—the awful, weird, unearthly cry she gave when they sentenced her over yonder,” pointing a lean and shaking finger towards the town.

“ Do not think of that now,” cried Marley, hurriedly ; “ it is all passed and gone for ever.”

“ Not think of it ? ” cried Rokewood, beating the bed in sudden fury. “ Oh ! if I could only stop thinking of it ; but I cannot.”

Marley threw himself upon his

knees by the bedside of his dying master.

“ In restitution you would find peace,” he whispered, earnestly. “ Oh, my dear, kind master, have you never thought of that ? ”

“ Never will I undo what I have done.”

“ But your promise to me,” cried Marley, wringing his hands. “ You told me years ago that you would not die with that sin upon your soul.”

“ Hist ! Marley, what would you ? Look there, behind those red curtains—I saw her.” He put out his shaking hands as though he would thus hide the picture away from his sight.

“ Only your imagination, sir,” said the servant.

“ Hear it ? How plain it sounds to-night. It is the anniversary to-day—twenty years ago—that she was sentenced to be hanged. I can hear that cry of hers now. O—o—o ! ”

“ Think no more about it,” entreated the servant, wiping the death-dew from his master’s face.

“ Great heavens ! ” shrieked Rokewood ; “ you know not what you ask. As well might you command the sea to stop its restless motion.

Night and day, day and night, that awful cry has rung in my ears for twenty years. Hist! how plain it sounds now."

He cowered down under the bed-clothes in abject terror, great drops of sweat standing out on his hands and face, as he listened to the imaginary sound.

The tramp of a horse's feet rang out on the turf, and the rattle of fast-approaching carriage wheels attracted the sick man's attention.

"Light the lamps," he gasped to the servant; "light all the lamps, and leave me alone when he comes in here. No prying about, remember."

Marley did as he was directed. Soon a flood of light streamed from the many windows, and a second later a carriage dashed up to the door and halted.

A tall, spare man with grey hair and long grey beard alighted therefrom and entered the house.

"Come at last," said Rokewood, feverishly. "You were not always so slow in answering my summons, Wiverly."

"True; but I was away when your message was left at the office. How are you to-night?"

"Well, as usual, I think," re-

turned the sick man, turning uneasily on his pillow. "Well, as usual, but for the strange fancies that have lately taken possession of my brain."

"I have brought the papers as you directed me to do."

"Yes, yes," with an impatient wave of the thin, white hand. "But there was really no need after all. Marley and those cursed doctors tell me that I am going to die, and I thought it would be as well to make my will to-night; but already I am feeling better."

"We must all die some time or other," rejoined the lawyer, quietly, "and it is a wise man who arranges his business in season."

"Ay, to be sure. You are right, Wiverly, as you always were."

"I have brought your old will, which you tell me is to be destroyed."

"Burn it now."

Wiverly laid a paper on the few coals that burned on the hearth. A puff, a single flame shooting suddenly far up the chimney, and it was gone for ever. "Now, then, it is gone. I wait your further instructions," said he, arranging papers, pens, and ink on the stand by the bedside.

"Hush!" cried Rokewood, wildly,

"hush ! Did you hear that shriek ? How unearthly it sounds to night ! God ! If I might never hear it more I could rest and be at peace."

"It is the wind," said Wiverly, listening for a moment to the sighing of the old pines. "It is the wind, and nothing more."

"It is she," screamed Rokewood, wildly, "it is Catherine's voice I hear shrieking, shrieking, shrieking ! Begone, I say, begone ! I am not dead, I will not die. See her ! there she sits," pointing a shaky finger towards a shadowy corner. "Scream," he continued, his voice sinking to a terrible whisper, "scream, and well you may ; for in life, in death, to the end of time itself I am your bitterest foe."

Wiverly poured out a soothing potion from a vial standing near, and administered it to the sick man. "Control yourself, Rokewood," said he firmly. "You are very ill, and every moment is precious. Do not exhaust your strength in this wild way, but try to be calm and tell me what you want done. See, I am ready."

"All ready," repeated Rokewood,

vacantly, sinking back, "all ready. Would to Heaven I could say so too."

"I have drawn up a new will," said Wiverly, in a loud voice—made purposely so in order to fix his client's attention upon what he was saying. "It is all ready for your signature, unless you desire to change it."

"No," said Rokewood, feebly, a vindictive gleam shooting from his sunken eyes, and his crafty face more crafty and haggard still. "There is to be no change ; the world may change, and the people in it, but Rokewood, never."

"Have you thought of the injustice you are doing your grandchild in making such a will as this one is ?" asked Wiverly, sternly.

Rokewood broke into a feverish laugh, a hideous chuckle that told plainer than words could have done the vindictive character of the man, who lay dying there. "Who dares to say 'grandchild' to me ?" he whispered, fiercely ; "who dares to think for one instant that a jail-bird's brat should inherit the Rokewood millions ? Never, never, never !"

CHAPTER II.

THE WILL.

"I KNOW well enough that it is not for me to argue this point with you, after all these years ; but as a friend, Rokewood, tell me truly if what you testified to at the time of Catherine's trial was the absolute truth. I will admit that of late I have had my doubts about it, owing to certain words you have dropped since your illness."

Again that horrible chuckle.

"And if you were mistaken—let me call it by that gentler name, for Heaven's sake—if you were mistaken then, there is yet time for you to make restitution, and repair the terrible wrong she suffered at your hands," said Wiverly, solemnly.

Rokewood glanced at his lawyer ; his lips worked nervously, and his thin hands shook like leaves blown by a winter's wind.

"Who talks of mistakes ?" cried he, rising upon his elbow and staring hard at Wiverly. "What I said then I now repeat—she killed him, and she shall not escape my vengeance." He laughed an unearthly laugh that rang throughout the

room. Wiverly wiped the froth from his lips and laid him down again.

"But her child—your son's child—is innocent, and the innocent should not be made to suffer for the sins of the guilty."

"Bah !"

"And that child, if living, is your only heir, and at your death should take her proper place as the mistress of Rokewood."

"Never, never, never ! No prison-born creature shall ever preside over Rokewood—perish the thought," screamed the sick man, frantically.

"Where is my will ? Bring it to me ; it shall be made now."

"Let me read it to you, for I have already drawn one up according to former instructions, and it is all fixed for signing."

"Give it me. Let me read it for myself—perhaps you would trick me out of my revenge even now ; but you cannot do it."

The lawyer handed him the paper, and turned the lamp so that the rays fell full upon it.

Rokewood grasped the will and read aloud slowly, skimming over the opening paragraphs until he came to the bequests :

"To the State of Virginia I give and bequeath all my personal property, with the exception of twenty thousand dollars, to be used as hereinafter mentioned.

"The sum of twenty thousand dollars is herein set aside to be used as a standing reward for the arrest and capture of Catherine Deane—otherwise known as Catherine Rokewood—who escaped from Wansmore Prison while under sentence of death for murder, the tenth day of September, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty—"

"My everlasting curse be upon her and hers for ever and ever and ever," screamed Rokewood, choking with weakness and vindictive passion.

"Bring me the pen, and call Marley—quick!"

"Control yourself, Rokewood," said Wiverly, in a soothing tone. "You will kill yourself in one of those spasms of rage, if you are not more careful. Remember that with difficulties of the heart excessive emotion is fatal. For Heaven's sake, try and be calm."

Rokewood glared up into the speaker's face, and a shudder ran over his wasted frame.

"Talk not to Rokewood of calm-

ness," said he, with a gesture of scorn, "but hand me the wine, for I am growing cold. Pile on more wood in the fire place, and call Marley; I want Marley."

The lawyer threw some pine faggots on the coals, and touched a bell.

Almost instantly the old servant appeared at the bedside.

"What o'clock is it, Marley?" asked Rokewood in a whisper.

"Ten, by the clock, sir."

"And what was it those cursed doctors said this morning? Do you remember? Speak."

"They said you could not last longer than midnight, sir."

"They lied, Marley; they lied like dogs. Hush! What is that I hear again? Catherine—"

"Oh, my dear master, have you done what you promised me you would do, when the lawyer came?" cried the poor old servant, sinking on his knees by the bedside, tears streaming down his wrinkled face.

"Ay," with a wicked look.

"And I am absolved from my vow at last. Thank God—at last." Rokewood put out his hand feebly.

"Marley, give me the pen. Hush now; how dark it seems! this cannot be death, freezing the very

marrow in my bones. More wine."

He drank the wine, and took the pen in his trembling fingers.

"This is my last will and testament," he said in a broken whisper. "I must sign—sign now. Remember your oath. Marley, your oath, man——"

"I am absolved," cried Marley, starting up in terror. "Oh, surely I may speak the truth for Catherine, at least; poor, lost, unhappy Catherine!"

"Be still—fool!" gasped Rokewood; "would you play me false now? Catherine shall have her just deserts—that much—not more. Hear her—that cry—it haunts me, even here."

He started up in bed, and looked wildly about him.

"Hark! Here she comes. I lied a royal lie, in a royal way. Eh, Marley?" He waved his arms restlessly from side to side, unmindful of the lawyer who stood patiently by.

"They said I swore her life away, and I did. Revenge is sweet. Marley!"

"Here, sir."

"Let there be more light; it is growing dark here. More—light—I—say."

"Rokewood!" cried Wiverly, placing a pen between the stiffening fingers, "Rokewood, sign the will."

The crafty look on the wizened face grew deeper and more crafty still as the lawyer's words fell upon the dying ears. He clutched the pen, making a last futile effort to write his name.

At that moment the wind came roaring down through the trees and a wail sounded mournfully through the room.

Rokewood shrieked. The pen fell from his hand and lay unused upon the satin counterpane. Another blast from the wind—another shivering cry among the murmuring pines.

Speechless, Rokewood turned his fast-glazing eyes upon the lawyer, and motioned slightly with his hand towards the unsigned will. Another moment and he was gone.

The spirit had flown so quickly that it was some time before they could realize that he was dead.

Wiverly felt for the pulse. It was still.

"Dead!" he said, solemnly, closing the lids down over the sunken eyes.

"Dead!" repeated Marley, with a burst of tears, as he looked long

and earnestly at the frail clay tenement which had so long resisted death—the cold and stony image of that stern and unyielding master he had served so faithfully—“dead, and he had sworn that he would not die.”

The lawyer pulled the sheet up over the rigid features.

“It is written of man,” said he, turning to the servant and speaking slowly, “that two things he shall not escape from, and one of these is death.”

CHAPTER III.

THE MISSING HEIR.

WIVERLY hurried back to town. He was the senior member of the great law firm of Wiverly & Wopping—a firm that had done business in a certain city that shall be nameless here.

For thirty years these gentlemen had had the management of the great Rokewood estate. And now that the master of that vast property had gone whereriches and wealth availeth not Mr. Wiverly thought it incumbent upon the firm to pay all due

tribute to the memory and the station of the deceased.

There were no mourners for Roke-wood. He had been too proud and overbearing to make a sincere friend. His temper had been too hot and his disposition too revengeful for any one ever to have loved him well enough to shed a tear for him in death.

Four generations in succession an only son had succeeded to the broad acres called Rokewood. Like all the men of his race, the dead man had married young; like them, too, while yet a young man, he had buried his wife in the vaults of Rokewood Chapel, where lay the dead-and-gone generations of his powerful house, where later on he had stood and looked his last farewell at his own dead son, the last male heir of the line; where he now claimed for himself the everlasting darkness and silence of the tomb.

Earth to earth and dust to dust. Mr. Wiverly could not help but feel the responsibility of his position as he journeyed back to the town.

Rokewood had died without signing his will, and the vast estate, the pride of the whole countryside, was literally begging an heir.

There was an heir to Rokewood—

a puny girl, born nineteen years before in Wansmore jail.

Mr. Wiverly would have given his good right hand if at that moment he could have laid it upon that missing girl and brought her forward as the mistress of Rokewood. Much as Rokewood had meant to defraud her from having her just rights, strong as his intention had been to put his wealth away from any claim she might make upon it, his object had been defeated by death. Whatever the form he had meant his vengeance to assume after he had bidden farewell to earth was frustrated now by that unsigned will.

The will being void, the law would take its natural course, and that course would be to place the estate in the power and possession of the lawful heir.

The only thing that worried the attorney was the whereabouts of that heir.

“It is a beautiful restitution,” he mused; “a beautiful restitution. Catherine Deane’s poor, despised child now inherits one of the most princely fortunes in the country. It is enough to make Rokewood turn over in his coffin; but she shall have her rights. *She shall have her rights!*” he repeated firmly, “and

she shall be produced, if we have to move every man, woman, and child on the American continent to bring it about.”

It was late when Mr. Wiverly returned to town, but he was used to late hours, and, besides, there was much to be done.

He went immediately to the undertaker’s and ordered him to go to Rokewood at once and make the necessary arrangements for the funeral of its late master.

Then he went to his own snug office, where he sat down and tried to form some plan for immediate action. His partner was long since in bed, and Mr. Wiverly could hear certain nasal strains issuing from the sacred precincts of his partner’s place of retirement which proclaimed his condition plainly enough.

“Wopping’s asleep, as usual,” muttered Wiverly, “but I’ll call him, anyway.”

He rose hastily, and knocked at a door near him.

The firm of Wiverly & Wopping occupied lodgings contiguous to their office. They were both elderly bachelors, noted for their personal integrity and fidelity to business.

Their place of business and sleep-

ing apartments were on the second floor of a great brick structure that had been originally built for mercantile purposes; but long and long ago, as the city had grown larger and its people more fashionable, the stores and shops had moved one by one into grander quarters, and the old "brick" had been gradually transformed into offices and lodgings, and finally given over wholly to that vast army of lawyers, and doctors, and clerks, and artists, and printers—that great brainful, busy class—which constitutes the world of Bohemia. Wiverly knocked lightly on the door; "Wopping," said he, softly, "get up."

"Don't bother me," returned a sleepy voice, "but do go away. I shan't be able to catch the forty winks nature requires if you insist on knocking like that."

By way of answer Wiverly pushed open the door and sat upon the bed. "I have just returned from Rokewood," said he, with meaning emphasis.

Wopping started up. "Well?"

"He is dead!"

"You don't say so?"

"He died while I was there."

"He signed the will, of course."

"No."

Mr. Wopping was very wide awake now.

"You knew that I had drawn a new will for him?"

"Oh, yes."

"He died before he could write his name to the bottom of it."

"And that great property——"

"As a natural result, that property now reverts to the one who rightfully should have it—that poor child."

Mr. Wopping got out of bed and began to pull on his clothes. "Yes," assented he, "to that poor child; though there might as well not be a poor child in the case, for all that we know of her, or her whereabouts. She may be dead for anything we know to the contrary."

"I don't think she is dead," said Wiverly. "I tell you that I believe in God, and God's justice is such that sooner or later that child will be restored to her heritage."

Mr. Wopping jammed first one fat foot into a slipper and then the other.

"Too many years have gone by since her disappearance for us to hope of finding her now. In my opinion we don't stand the ghost of a show for bringing her forward at this late day. It is the eleventh

hour, as it were ; besides, think how many experts have failed in their efforts to trace her. I tell you there is nothing but failure for us."

"We won't argue that point, for I realize the difficulties of the situation—none more so. Come out into the office while I tell you of the new plan I have studied up."

Wopping did so.

"In the first place," said Wiverly, sitting down with his feet on the fender, where a small fire was burning cheerily, "the reward which Rokewood has kept standing all these years for the capture of his daughter-in-law is to be doubled. This is at his own dictation, mind you, and is a stipulation in his last will."

"But if he did not sign that document it is worth less than the paper it is written upon."

"I am aware of that fact."

"Well?"

"I purpose complying with the directions in regard to the reward. But I also purpose that hand in hand with that additional reward shall go the announcement of Rokewood's death——"

"Very good, so far!"

—"coupled with a demand that the child—the heiress to Rokewood

—shall now come forward and claim her rightful inheritance."

Wopping laughed.

"You're a droll one, you are," said he. "Do you expect to catch Catherine through her maternal anxiety to establish her daughter's pecuniary interests on their proper basis? Fie, your innocence is amusing. What woman with a price upon her life would put in a claim to property for her child, though that property were twice the value of Rokewood? Here is her own inheritance lying idle and accumulating year after year because she dare not claim it without perilting her liberty and her life."

"In the second place," went on Wiverly, nothing daunted by his partner's unfavourable criticism, "I don't believe that Catherine is guilty of the murder of her husband. On his death-bed Rokewood dropped words which created the doubt in my mind—though I always believed that if she did kill him it was accidentally done, and not intentionally, as Rokewood testified at the time of her trial."

"Now, then, you've hit it. If we could find some means by which we might establish her innocence and get a pardon for her we might then

stand a show to find the child. But, so long as Catherine is under sentence of death, she will keep out of the law."

"In the third place," said Wiverly, with marked emphasis, "I have made up my mind to bring a celebrated detective from the North, and put him on the trail. If there is a secret hidden away there in Rokewood's dead bosom depend upon it that his old servant knows it; but he is bound not to divulge it without Rokewood's consent, and that is now impossible. A skilled detective will soon get at the bottom facts. I have thought of telegraphing for one at once."

"We have already exhausted the skill of the best detectives, and what did it all amount to?" said Wopping.

"But as managers of that great and valuable property we must do something towards finding the legal heir."

"That is true."

"And the man I speak of has certainly done some remarkable feats in detective work. We can

let him try the case, surely, and find out what he can do."

"Yes," returned Wopping, with a sigh, "he can do no more than fail, as all the others have done before him."

"I don't believe he will fail," said Wiverly, stoutly.

"What is the name of this man you speak of—and where is his home?"

"His home is in Chicago, and his name is Captain William Turtle."

"Never heard of him," said Wopping, indifferently; "but send the dispatch, and when you send it mention the reward. It may have a stimulating effect upon his detective powers. Such things do sometimes."

Wiverly wrote hastily, and tearing off the sheet he picked up his hat.

"I'll send it to-night," he said; "the sooner the better, and as I shan't be back for some time, perhaps, you had better not sit up for me, but go to bed again."

CHAPTER IV.

THE NOBODY.

HOWEVER, Mr. Wopping did not act immediately upon his friend's perfectly disinterested advice and go to bed. Instead, he sat down before the cheerful little fire that burned up brightly and clearly in the polished steel grate, with his slippers feet resting comfortably on the shining fender and his thoughts travelling into the bygone past.

As he sat dreaming by the fire by degrees he became conscious of the slow and shuffling motions of a pair of feet in the room above him. Forward and backward, backward and forward, went the feet, never faster, never slower. Just how long this motion had been going on before it attracted Mr. Wopping's attention he could not have told, though it must have been for some time.

"Poor Bane," said Wopping, with a sigh. "He must be worse to-night. Ill, and poor, and friendless, he is indeed to be pitied."

Walk, walk, walk.

The incessant shuffling over the floor was becoming unbearable.

Wopping seized a walking-stick and gave three distinct raps on the ceiling.

The raps were answered. Evidently a code had been established by which the raps were intelligible to the occupant of the sky-parlour. Wopping struck the ceiling again, lightly this time.

The steps ceased, then began again. A door opened, closed, and somebody passed out into the passage. Mr. Wopping's quick ear detected the sound. He smiled, rose quickly, and placed a fat-bellied copper kettle on the hob.

The feet were now descending the staircase, evidently pausing now and then as a fit of coughing shook the person.

Mr. Wopping shook his old head knowingly as the shuffling steps sounded nearer his own door.

He whisked out some tumblers and a paper of white sugar from a mysterious drawer in the green-baize-covered table. Then big yellow lemons in delicate folds of tissue paper were next placed by the side of the sugar. A suspicious-looking bottle filled with a clear, amber-hued fluid, that reminded one

of brandy more than anything else, he held in his hand as the door opened and an attenuated figure shambled into the cozy rooms.

"By the Lord Harry!" cried Mr. Wopping, cheerily, "I was so tired of sitting here alone that, when I heard your footsteps overhead there, I determined to call you down, and make you stay until Wiverly returns."

"Don't seek to disguise your kindness to me in that way," said the Nobody, in a trembling voice. "I'm afraid my coughing annoys you. It annoys me often enough."

"Take a seat and be comfortable," said Mr. Wopping, hospitably. "I'll fix up a 'night-cap' for you that will make you sleep and dream that you are in heaven."

"Oh! that I might not only dream it but awake to find it true."

"Tush! never say die," cried Wopping, blithely.

The new-comer sat down and spread his thin hands to the blaze.

His frail figure was lost in the loose folds of the ill-fitting garments that enveloped it, and a few thin locks of reddish hair strayed out from under the broad rim of his felt hat.

A pair of glasses concealed his

eyes, and a straggling beard, well streaked with grey, streamed down over his waistcoat. He looked what he was, old and ill, and very poor.

"Haven't I told you," said Mr. Wopping, half playfully, half severely, "that you are not to go tramping up and down your room all night long? Why, man, you ought to be in bed, and get all the sleep you can. Your disease is such that late hours serve only to help it along."

"Let it do its very worst," said Bane, indifferently. "I have told you, these ten years, that life is a burden to me, and I say it again. Let death come. The sooner it comes the better for me."

"You are despondent," said Wopping, as he lifted the flat-bellied copper tea-kettle from the hob. "Now, I'll be bound that you haven't eaten a mouthful during the last four-and-twenty hours. I have noticed that, when your restless spells come on, you don't stop tramping long enough to eat so much as it would take to keep a fly alive, let alone a man."

"No," returned Bane, with a sickly smile. "Sometimes I think but for your friendly exertions on my behalf

I never would swallow another mouthful of anything. Accept the fact that I do eat to please you as an acknowledgment from me that your kindness is not entirely lost, even when expended upon a nobody like Matthew Bane."

Mr. Wopping was rolling the lemons briskly on his knee. He suddenly pushed aside the papers that littered the table, and squeezing the juice of the lemons into the glasses, poured in a little of the brandy, added some lumps of the sugar, and filled the tumblers up with hot water. From some place only known to himself he brought forth some meat and bread and a bit of cheese.

"Now, Matthew," said he, with a hearty good-humour, "sit up here by the table with me, and put yourself outside of a glassful of this mixture. It isn't strong, man. I remember your peculiar aversion to strong liquors. It is only lemon and water, with a dash of brandy in it. I got the formula from a celebrated physician, who declared there was nothing equal to it, in its own particular way, and I believe him."

Bane drew up his chair, and sipped slowly from the glass of steaming liquid Wopping had pushed

towards him. His manner was shy and repellent.

"Are you busy nowadays?" asked Wopping, filling up his own glass again.

"Not particularly," answered Bane, shrinking down nearer the fire; "I wish I were."

"We shall have some copying for you to-morrow, if you feel well enough to do it."

"I shall be only too glad to get it," said Bane, eagerly, "and, though my health is wretched, I am far happier when busy with some light employment."

"Have you no friends, Matthew, with whom you might spend the remainder of your days in peace and comfort? Pardon me if I again touch upon what seems to be a painful topic to you. But your ill-health and loneliness must be my excuse. You seem to be so utterly alone in the world that my heart aches for you."

"I have no friend save yourself, sir," said the Nobody, faintly, "and deem me not unthankful if I say that I desire none. Let me live alone and die alone, as I must—and wish to."

He shrank away from the table, and sat, a heap of shivering, shabby

garments, in the shadowy corner near the fire.

Mr. Wopping sighed.

If anybody had asked him—and no one ever had asked him—to explain his reasons for taking such an interest in the poor outcast the kind-hearted lawyer could not have given one. Mr. Wopping was a philanthropist in the broadest sense, and it was enough for him to know that here was a fellow-being who needed his care and attention.

The lawyer had begun the acquaintance himself, and made the first overtures towards a friendship which was apparently but a one-sided friendship after all.

The outcast never unbent, never relaxed from the cold, repellent manner that had characterized him from the beginning.

But the lawyer did not despair.

"If the warm rays of the sun of human kindness and brotherly love can thaw out the frozen springs of that cold and frigid nature he shall feel their influence," Wopping often said. And it was upon this principle that he continued his kindly efforts.

"You spoke of copying," said Bane presently, from his shadowy corner. "Is it work that I can do in my own room?" It was a singu-

larity of his that he preferred darkness to light, and that, no matter what the occasion that called him into the lawyer's snug office, he immediately shrunk away into some shadowy corner and there shivered and trembled until it was time to take his departure.

"I think not," returned Wopping. "What we want done is the copying of certain documents pertaining to the estate of the late Mr. Rokewood, and it will have to be done here."

"The late Mr. Rokewood? Am I to understand he is dead?"

The Nobody's frail hand trembled visibly as he reached out from his shadowy retreat and set the tumbler upon the baize-covered table.

"He is dead. He died to-night, at about ten o'clock. My partner has just returned from there."

The Nobody's head had dropped forward upon his breast, he shook from head to heel, as if with some strong, repressed emotion.

"He died without signing his will, so that the great Rokewood estate will now fall to that grandchild of his—if we can find her. It's a mighty pretty property for a young lady to inherit."

The Nobody rose suddenly, and shuffled towards the door.

"Yes," he muttered, "a pretty property ; but, to my way of thinking, it comes too late now."

"That's as may be," returned Wopping, cheerfully. "As managers of the Rokewood millions we must look her up, anyhow, and see whether she will say it comes too late or not. My impression is that she will be glad to get it."

"Don't, don't!" cried the outcast, catching the lawyer's hand and speaking with visible emotion. "For God's sake, don't attempt it!"

"It is our duty."

"Duty!" muttered Bane, suddenly dropping the hand he had caught up, and shuffling out into the passage. "You talk of duty, and, God forgive me, Mr. Wopping, I had thought you to be a kind-hearted man."

Mr. Wopping stared in speechless surprise at the retreating figure. And well he might. It was the first, the only time he had seen emotion of any sort manifested by Matthew Bane.

CHAPTER V.

A PEDIGREE WANTED.

THE ensuing morning, as Mr. Wopping sat in his office busy with some reports he was trying to make out, there came a sharp succession of raps on his office door.

Mr. Wopping was not in quite his usual good humour, and did not relish the interruption at that moment. He knew the raps were made by a certain young friend of his, the son of a prominent and wealthy banker, whom he had trotted on his knees in his infancy, and indulged and spoiled in his maturer years. Frank, and bright, and jovial, Teddy Bellew had ever found a warm and sincere friend in the person of the genial attorney. Still, though Mr. Wopping loved Teddy as he might have loved his own son, if he had ever had one, there were times when Teddy's absence was preferable to his company. And this happened to be one of the times.

"Old Popsie-Wopsie," called a fresh young voice, "are you in there? Because if you are there I must see you—willy-nilly."

Wopping reluctantly opened the door.

"Come in, if you really must," said he, a trifle crossly ; "but don't stand there hammering away. You attract a great deal of unnecessary attention, and besides might split the door panels and set the house agent after me."

"To the dogs with the panels, and the house agent too, for that matter," retorted a tall, blonde young man, who marched into the apartment and sat himself down in the attorney's choicest chair.

He was apparently about twenty-six years old, with dark eyes and fair hair, which was carelessly brushed up from a wide forehead. A drooping, tawny moustache hid his mouth, and there was an easy grace in his motion which told that he was a spoiled child of fortune.

"I'll tell you what, old Popsie-Wopsie," began Bellew, somewhat irreverently.

"See here, Teddy," interrupted Mr. Wopping, "don't 'Popsie-Wopsie' me any more, if you please. What must people think who hear you sing out like that at my door?"

Inasmuch as it was Mr. Wopping himself who had, in the old knee-trotting times, taught young Bellew

the Popsie-Wopsie epithet, this censure was a trifle severe, to say the least.

Bellew glanced comically at his companion's disturbed countenance.

"And is it mad, and does it vex its little soul about such things as names? And don't it know that 'by any other name a rose would smell as sweet,' etc.?"

"Teddy, if you have anything of importance to say, out with it. I'm very busy now, and ought not lose a moment's time. My dear boy, I've always had to labour for my money, and always expect to. The firm of Wiverly & Wopping hasn't a rich old father to run to when the funds run low. And you have."

"Yes—more's the pity."

"And money is a necessary article."

"In its way — yes," assented Teddy.

"So, if you have any business with me, make it known at once, and be done with it."

"Well, then," began Teddy, submissively, "you know Pollie?"

"You mean that I know of her," interrupted Wopping.

"All the same, old dad," said Bellew, with an airy wave of his white hand ; "but you can't deny

knowing how long and devotedly I have loved her."

"And made a mooning idiot of yourself by so doing," broke in Wopping, impatiently. There his reports lay, waiting to be made out and corrected, and here was a lovesick young fellow taking up valuable time in recounting his *affaires de cœur*. Wopping was really angry. Bellew was a particular friend; but, then, even very particular and dear friends should use some discretion in timing their visits and their confidences, and Bellew was provokingly indifferent to everything save what concerned himself.

"But you don't know," went on that presumptuous boy, with irritating calmness, "that I took advantage of an opportunity this morning, and asked her to be Mrs. Bellew, Jr."

"It can't be."

"That is just what she said too."

"Teddy, stop bantering and state the case, if you expect any help from me," said Wopping, testily.

"I've been stating it ever since I came into your blamed old room," retorted Bellew, with some warmth, "and what sort of satisfaction do I get for my trouble?"

Wopping sat down resignedly in

his big chair, and lit his pipe.

"Now, Bellew," said he, "begin at the first of the story—page one, you know, and tell it in a connected manner. You are an unmitigated nuisance, and the only remedy there is for me is to give you a hearing at your own convenience."

"So kind of you," said Bellew, with an airy wave of his white hand; "and here it is in a nutshell. I spent the night with Dane—he's a chum of mine, you know, and just up from the fever. On my way home this morning, and having to pass Miss Wardlaw's residence—don't laugh"—as Wopping's lip curled in a sarcastic smile. "It was about nine o'clock—awfully early, wasn't it? Perhaps it might have been a trifle later by Columbus time—to be exact."

"Never mind the time," growled the lawyer; "it is enough to know that you began at an exceptionally early hour in the day to make an ass of yourself. But as there is no accounting for tastes, just try to confine your narrative to the main points, and come to a conclusion as soon as possible."

"Yes," said Teddy, humbly. "Dane has lodgings on—it don't matter where. You know he is as

poor as a church mouse, since the failure on Wall Street last spring. Money goes sailing to the 'demnition bow-wows' when the banks burst, don't it? Well, as I was saying, I had spent the night with Dane, and was coming home bright and early, when I happened to walk past Pollie's residence just to—a—take sort of look at her window, or something of that kind, when who should I see on the doorsteps but Pollie herself? Of course I stopped, and she looked so distractingly pretty that before I fairly realized what I was about I had asked her to be Mrs. Bellew, Jr. 'Pon my soul! I couldn't help it. Pollie is so awfully pretty—and the worst of it—or perhaps the best of it, is that she is just as beautiful at six o'clock in the morning as she ever can be at fifteen o'clock at night; and it wasn't two minutes after she had smiled and said 'Good-morning, Mr. Bellew,' that I had laid my heart and hand and all the rest of my anatomy at her feet—metaphorically speaking, of course—"

"Never mind the metaphors," said Wopping. "Of course she jumped at the chance?"

"Not that I know of," said Teddy, dryly.

"She did not refuse you?" Wopping stared in surprise at his young friend.

"Flatly."

"Did you tell her that you are a rich man's son?"

"She knew that long ago."

"Well, I must say that she is as big a young fool as you are. It isn't every girl who would let such a prize escape her. You are to be congratulated, Teddy; for I supposed that a fellow with your prospects would be snapped up in short order, particularly by designing young women who seem to want to better their social position in life."

"That shows that you do not know women so well as you think you do—especially girls like my Pollie," said Bellew, loftily.

"Perhaps she is in love with another fellow."

"If I thought that," began Bellew, gnashing his teeth. "If I thought that—"

"Oh, you would live through it. 'Men have died and worms have eaten them—but not for love;' remember that, Teddy. It would be all the same to you in a hundred years from now. Such things are, and have been, and always will be," said Wopping, with irritating calm-

ness. "If I remember right, such an affair occurred to your humble servant once, and he lived through it. Try your chances in some other direction, and you will probably meet with better success."

"You are all wrong in your surmises," said Teddy, hurriedly. "The trouble is not that Pollie cares for anybody else. She owned up that she loves me, and at the same time she refuses to be my wife. It seems that some time ago my father heard somehow—blast the gossips—that his hopeful son was paying a trifle too close attention to a pretty pianiste, and what does he do but rush off and hunt Miss Wardlaw up; and after he finds her, pours into her ears a mess of stuff to the effect that she is not at all the sort of young lady he can or will receive as his future daughter-in-law. To clinch the matter, he winds up the business by threatening me with disinheritance if I persist and marry her; this threat of father's has the effect of making Pollie refuse me. Now, I just want to ask, Mr. Wopping, if this isn't a pretty style of parent for a young man to have? I tell you that I'm getting about disgusted, and almost wish I had not been born a Bellew in the first place."

"And how does Miss Wardlaw's relatives take the matter?"

"There's the rub again," Bellew went on, in an injured tone. "As if a man need to care about his wife's relatives. Polly really has no family at all, and not a solitary ancestor that she knows of. It strikes me that the lucky man who wins a girl situated like Pollie is—in the matter of relatives and ancestors—should be congratulated, particularly when he considers the fact that mother-in-law-ism will be impossible. By Jove! I've often heard father going off into spasms of rage over his own mother-in-law—at such times, of course, as the dear old girl could not hear him. But if you'll believe me, in spite of his experience, he now professes to think that the lack of a mother-in-law in my matrimonial economy would smack of something disreputable. There's no getting on with some men nowadays—particularly the fathers. You can see for yourself now how the want of money and lack of a family tree as long as the moral law ruins Pollie's prospects with my father, and closes his doors against her as effectually as if she did not exist at all."

"But I don't see that you can

change things unless you marry her, any way, and take the risk of being forgiven afterwards."

"I'd do that in a minute," cried Bellew, striking the table with his fist. "But Pollie won't. She says she never, never will be my wife until father gives his consent; and, unless Pollie comes into a big fortune, or finds some ancestors who came over in the *Mayflower*, he'll never say yes. So, in this dilemma I've come to you, Wopping, for you're the best friend a fellow ever had; and I want you to go to work and find Pollie a pedigree. Now, then!"

Wopping burst out laughing.

"Pedigrees are not in my line; but you can buy 'em, I've been told."

"You don't understand me," said Bellew, impatiently. "Pollie must have some relatives found for her; it's a case of necessity, and they've got to come somehow. Let me bring her to see you, or, what is better, go with me to see her home, and listen to the story of her first recollections. She belonged to a play-actor in her infancy, she thinks, for she remembers bits of things that would necessarily belong about play-acting people."

CHAPTER VI.

A BEAUTIFUL NOBODY.

WOPPING picked up his hat.

"If I go at all, on what I know beforehand will be a wild-goose chase, I must go now," said he. "And in return for this act of kindness on my part you must stay away from my room for the next three days."

"I'll do anything you like, old dad, if you'll only find some one Pollie may lay a claim of kinship to. I'm sure, Wopping, that, with all your skill and experience in ferreting out mysterious cases, you are certain to be of some help to us. Not that I care a silver rupee—that's forty-six cents' worth to be exact—who her father was, or her mother either, but she has some nonsensical ideas about it, since my father talked to her, that I can neither explain away nor overcome."

"Supposing that we should really find her people, and they were anything but reputable?"

"In that case," said Bellew, firmly, "we would give her to understand that she was alone in the world, and

you would fix up a spurious descent for her from some old family now supposed to be extinct. Pollie's prejudices would then be overcome, father's objections would disappear, and I would be enabled to marry the girl of my choice. Don't you see?"

"Plainly."

"And, Wopping," hesitated Bellew, putting his hands on his friend's shoulder, "whether we find any relatives for her or not—and I almost hope we won't—you are to keep the main fact in your mind that I don't care a brass button whether she has one parent or a hundred thousand, so she consents to name an early day for the wedding. You are sure you understand now?"

"Oh, it's all clear to my mind, Teddy. And it strikes me forcibly that you are one of the most consummate young fools I ever had the pleasure of knowing. But tell me, as we walk along, how you came to make the lady's acquaintance, for it seems queer to me that a fellow of your sort should go outside of his own circle in society to pick himself a wife."

"It is easily enough done," returned Bellew, calmly, "and not to be wondered at either, when you

know that it is considered the correct thing now to hire lady pianists to play at our swell entertainments, and that only beautiful and accomplished ladies are in demand. I first saw Pollie at M.'s," mentioning a rich and aristocratic family residing in the most fashionable suburb of the city. "I was a goner from the moment I placed my eyes on her, and, although it is against all rules, little Allie M. introduced me to her. I've no doubt but Allie got a lecture for it; her adorable mamma witnessed the scene, and poor Pollie never was sent for again to play at that place. But I didn't know where she lived, and, what was worse, none of my friends would tell me, for it seems that they had all noticed what they were pleased to call my infatuation for a music-teacher; so there I was, all broke up, as I may say, and no remedy at hand, when, as luck would have it, I met Bob Dane one day, and insisted upon going home with him and having a time for old acquaintance sake. He lives in lodgings now since his money went kiting in Wall Street, and they are not the best of the kind either, though in a respectable part of the city. When I took my departure

that night, which was at a rather late hour, it must be confessed, who should I see letting herself in at the house opposite with a night-key but Pollie. She had been playing at some fashionable entertainment, and had just got home. I did not speak to her then, but I actually trembled with delight to think I had discovered her. After that I hung about the place a great deal, and I know Bob thought I was the most attentive friend he had, for he said I was at his room so much that he did not get a chance to take his daily promenade. Still, I somehow happened to miss Pollie in some unaccountable fashion until one night three months after. I had been to see Bob, as usual, when what should I hear but a terrific screech, and, running in the direction from whence the sound proceeded, I found a young girl struggling in the grasp of a couple of ruffians.

"To knock the fellows down did not take me two seconds hardly, but that was no sooner done than the young lady fainted dead away, and then I discovered that it was Pollie herself. Well, when she came to, which she did presently, she could do no less than ask me into the house."

"And it wasn't necessary for you to be urged to do so, I suppose?" said Wopping.

"Indeed no," said Bellew, ingenuously; "that was the very thing I had been wanting to do for months, and I wasn't the one to refuse it, now the opportunity was at hand. From that night I've been going regularly to see Pollie, and but for my father's untimely interference we would have been safely married in less than four weeks more. Beastly shame, isn't it?"

"So it seems," returned Wopping sarcastically, as they at last turned into a quiet side street, and Bellew rang the bell at a plain brick residence standing a little removed from the narrow thoroughfare.

They were conducted into a small parlour, and a moment later a pretty girl entered the apartment.

Wopping knew this girl must be the veritable Pollie by the lovely blush that reddened her forehead as she saw Bellew, and even to the lawyer's prejudiced eyes she did credit to his friend's taste.

"Miss Wardlaw, I have fetched an old friend of mine and my father's to make your acquaintance," cried Bellew, presenting the lawyer. "Mr. Wopping, this is Miss Wardlaw."

The attorney gallantly took the slim hand Miss Pollie extended to him, wondering vaguely who it was she so strongly reminded him of.

“And, Pollie,” pursued the incorrigible Teddy, “he is one of the best lawyers in these whole United States, and he has promised to hear your story, and to help us if he can.”

“There is very little to tell you,” said she, turning to the attorney; “very little indeed, and I am sure that little is of no importance whatever, either to myself or anybody else.”

Her voice was soft and low; involuntarily Wopping bent his head to listen.

“Let me decide what its worth may be,” said he, quietly, still wondering where it was that he had seen some one like her, and puzzling his brain over the vague resemblance. “Tell me your story first.”

“Of course Teddy,” with a glance at that infatuated young man, “has told you that I have no knowledge of my right name, or of the place and date of my birth. My first recollections are of being with a company of horse-riders, and of riding, all tricked out in gauze and silver spangles, in a two-wheeled

vehicle, behind a string of little ponies, and people laughed and clapped their hands and gave me bon-bons to eat. It seems to me as if I rode behind those ponies for years and years; but of course that could not have been, for Auntie Wardlaw said I certainly could not have been more than four years old when she took me in and cared for me.

“It was during the last year of the war that I came to her. There had been a great battle fought near a town about ten miles away, and the victorious troops of the Northern army were in close pursuit of the flying foe, when they made a brief halt in Miss Wardlaw’s meadows, and a soldier riding up to her house asked her if she would take and care for a little child they had found on the way. She assented, and he lifted me down from his saddle and left me, sick and unconscious, to her care.

“Nobody ever claimed me, or inquired for me, and auntie—I call her so, because she became fond of me and wished me to do so—determined to adopt me for her own. She was a spinster, and very rich, and as I grew to womanhood I had every advantage that money

could procure me. Auntie always assured me that she would make me her heir, but she died—was killed in a railway accident—before her will was made. Her brother and sister inherited everything that was hers—and so I came up here to make a living by the help of the education she gave me."

"And that is all?" said Wopping, with evident disappointment.

"Yes. As I told you in the first place, there is little enough to tell," she said, smiling faintly.

"And you haven't even the conventional strawberry mark, or a convenient mole by which you might be identified?"

"Absolutely nothing," the smile dying out entirely now. "I am afraid that I am a nobody, and will have to remain so."

"You were ill when Miss Wardlaw took you in charge?"

"Very. It was weeks before I could sit up, and when I did my memory was dulled so that the commonest things I should have known were like dreams. I could only tell her that my name was Pollie, and that I had ridden horses. And, as if to support the theory that Miss Wardlaw entertained that I belonged to some circus company, the few

poor rags I had on were covered with silver spangles and tawdry ornaments of that sort. There was one thing, however, which I always hoped would lead to my identification, and that was a peculiar ornament which was attached to a gold chain about my neck, and which I never remember to have been without."

"Will you let me look at that chain and ornament you speak of? There may be something about it that will give us a clue."

Pollie brought the chain. It was a slender gold one, such as people put around the necks of little children. A filbert-shaped ornament of gold, on one side of which was a partly obliterated monogram, was attached to it.

Wopping studied the monogram closely. He could make out the letter "I," and a letter which he believed was "C," but of this he was uncertain. There was still a third one which he could not decipher.

"If you will let me take this chain and ornament, Miss Wardlaw, I will promise to return it to you safely; but I would really like to show it to a practical engraver. I think that under a powerful glass we may be able to solve the problem of the

monogram. That done, it may give us a very valuable clue, upon which a detective might work with a possibility of success."

"I shall be only too glad to let you take the chain," said Pollie, simply, "if you think it will be of any help towards finding a trace of the family I spring from, though I am afraid your efforts will be in vain, for years ago Auntie Wardlaw tried to discover some trace of kith and kindred for me, but without avail."

"I will be plain with you, Miss Wardlaw," said the lawyer, kindly, and tell you in the beginning that I do not anticipate success. Still, some very wonderful discoveries have been made by following up slighter clues than we have in this filbert-shaped ornament, and we may have in this simple thing a golden thread that will lead us on to the most favourable results. Let us hope so, at least."

Mr. Wopping little imagined the importance of the secret contained in the little ornament he now held in his hand; if he had done so our story would now be told.

CHAPTER VII.

AT THE COSTUMER'S SHOP.

"THERE is a little thread we may follow up at first," said Wopping, as they found themselves once more in the open street. "It may lead to something, and it may not. Still, we can try it, and we may stumble on the right thing in the end."

"And what is that?" eagerly asked Bellew. "To me it seems like putting one's head in a dark pocket, looking for something that isn't there."

"I mean her recollections of the circus, for circus it must have been. I presume she was one of those midgets horse-riding companies are so fond of. The thing to do now is to look over the newspaper files in search of the companies advertised to appear in certain parts of the country sixteen years ago. Once possessed of a knowledge of the different troupes and their whereabouts at the time, we can enter into a correspondence with the proprietors—or better, go and interview them in person. The doubtful thing is to find a horse-riding company whose history ex-

tends back over a period of sixteen years. Circuses are usually short-lived affairs."

"There's an old fellow in Vine Street," said Bellew, "who has been engaged for years in the manufacture of theatrical costumes. He carries a full line of everything needed by the profession, and gets up all sorts of things. Now, supposing that we were to call upon him, do you think he would give us the benefit of what he knows?"

"By all means," said Wopping. "We are certain to gain information from him that will be of advantage to us. After we make a tour of the newspaper offices we will go and see him. Ten chances to one that he gives us the very knowledge we are now seeking. Those old costumers are regular budgets of recollections and bygone reminiscences."

"To tell the truth," said Bellew, "I'd rather my Pollie went down to her grave without a pedigree than that she should find one among those circus people."

"It isn't for us to say who our ancestors shall be," returned Wopping, cheerfully. "Posterity must take its chances. There is, however, a sort of remedy nowadays,

much used by people who happen to be unluckily situated in the matter of pedigree. If the descent isn't considered satisfactory they correct it on the books."

"Yes," cried Bellew, catching at the idea, "and that is what I mean to do exactly for Pollie. If her pedigree fails to be all that it should be, it must be fixed so that it will satisfy the desires of the most exacting."

A careful search through the various newspaper offices failed to give any news of circus people who could by any possibility have known Pollie.

"One might as well look for a needle in a hay-mow, with the expectation of finding it," said Bellew.

"This is merely the beginning. Don't expect success at the start," exclaimed the lawyer, calmly.

"Mr. Warming," cried Teddy, as they stepped into a dingy shop, "I've brought my friend here to see your curiosities and to hear some of those capital stories you know about theatrical people. Hope we don't intrude?"

"No intrusion whatever," returned the old costumer, warmly. "Glad to see you, and any friend

you may like to bring with you to my humble establishment. Not that it is so very humble either, in one sense, for my costumes have quite a reputation, and have gone the length and breadth of the land. Not a few of them have taken a trip across the water."

Wopping glanced curiously at the strange and motley scene that met his gaze.

Over the shelves that lined the sides of the room were stretched faded nettings of what had once been coloured lace. The shelves themselves were stuffed with tawdry fineries. A skull and cross-bones lay on a small table, and a flame-coloured satin robe edged with ermine hung over the back of a chair. Coronets, helmets, swords and shirts of mail hung on the walls and were scattered in heaps on the dusty floor.

"These buskins," said the costumer, picking out a pair of soft, yellow shoes from a promiscuous heap; "these buskins belonged to Charlotte Cushman; she gave 'em to me one day when she came to order a new robe. I don't furnish shoes, but you see I have some here. They are merely keepsakes, I never wear 'em. I have a very fair col-

lection. Nearly every actress of note has given me a pair of her sandals. There's one of Bernhardt's—slim, isn't it?"

"You have made the acquaintance of nearly everybody that ever engaged in the theatrical or show business," returned Wopping.

The old costumer smiled softly.

"I should say so. Booth was a personal friend of mine, and Edwin Forrest has many a time sipped wine from that glass yonder. To enumerate the names of all the celebrated people who have purchased goods of me would be like filling the pages of a book with figures. And when it comes to the circus people, their trade is a specialty with me, and I doubt if in the last five-and-twenty years there has been a company on the road, either big or little, that I have not supplied with costumes one time or another."

"And how is trade now in comparison with former days?"

"Trade is changed. In some ways it is much better, and in others not so good. When it comes to the getting up of actors' and actress' suits, they now require costlier materials and more of them. In this respect the business is improved. But formerly there were many small

companies who played at fairs and small country places, and who depended upon juvenile performers. We once did a rushing business getting up what was called 'angel costumes' for those little folks, and it was a mighty paying trade too. The goods used were necessarily of the flimsiest description and did not stand much wear. That is all over with now, however. I remember there used to be a man by the name of Jeakles, who had what he called a company of Liliputians, and he always played to good business. His children drew big houses wherever he went with them and it cost him a fortune to keep them in costumes."

"And is he still at it, or have his fairies grown into giants by this time and ruined the business?" laughed Bellew.

"Oh, he's about somewhere, though not in that particular branch of the show business. He met with a great misfortune during the last year of the war ; happened to be in a town during a sharp fight, and some of his children were killed. It broke him up, and he never travelled with juveniles afterwards ; and he has somehow been going down hill ever since. It seems as if he

lost his grip, and he can't catch on again, that's about the long and short of it. Jeakles was an Englishman, and when he fell to bad luck it seemed as if all he could do was to fold up his hands and curse this 'blarsted Hamerican country.' "

"And his company was composed of children?" asked Wopping, with interest. Perhaps here was an opening through which to trace Miss Pollie's lost pedigree.

"Yes, all children, and there were ten of 'em—the youngest a mere trot of three years. But the way those children rode and jumped and turned back-handed somersaults to an applauding public was enough to make older people sick with envy."

"I'd like to see that Mr. Jeakles," said Wopping, carelessly. "You couldn't give me his address, could you, now, Mr. Warming?"

The costumer shook his head. "I cannot really, much as I would like to do so. You see Jeakles fights shy of me on account of a bill I have against him. In fact, it is years since he has entered my establishment."

"Well, I've taken half a notion to look him up, and perhaps to start him on the road to fortune again.

What did you say the name of his show used to be? I'll make a note of it, as I don't want to forget it."

Wopping took out a card and his pencil ready to write it down.

The old costumer took from off a dusty shelf a ponderous volume with thick brass corners and heavy brass clasps.

"I have in this book the name of every actor and actress and the name of every company that ever bought a cent's worth of goods in my house," said he, slowly running his finger down a column of "J's," "and here it is: 'Jeakles' Liliputian Hippodrome."

Wopping made a note of it.

"And if you really do think of starting Jeakles up again in the show business don't forget the old, reliable costume house of Henry Warming. I'll speak for your trade now, and engage to sell you more goods and better goods for the money that can be had at any other house in the city."

"You've no idea where I might find him now?"

"Not the slightest. The last I heard of him was about a year ago, when he was out somewhere in the Western country giving concerts

with the assistance of his wife and a coloured man, half-brother, he claimed, to Blind Tom. But just where he is now is more than I can say. I only hope you may find him and do him a kind turn, for Jeakles is a good-hearted fellow, though just a trifle 'off' in business matters."

"I shall find him," said Wopping, "there is no doubt about that. And, while we are about it, I wish you would give me a list of the juvenile companies on the road at present."

Warming consulted his book again.

"I don't find one left," said he, after a moment's pause. "Children don't pay as they used to. People's tastes have changed wonderfully in the last fifteen years. Really, I believe that Jeakles' juvenile company was the very last one that did any sort of business whatever, and it broke him up in the end. You see it takes a great deal of time and trouble to train a child to be a good performer; and, besides, I believe nowadays there is what is called a Humane Society, that meddles with such matters, so that it don't pay a man to start out on the road with a juvenile troupe when there is a likelihood of his being snatched up at any moment for it."

"I'm certain to find Mr. Jeakles," said Wopping, turning to go. "If anything comes of it I'll let you know; be sure that we will remember you."

"Send me your trade, sir; that's all I'll ask."

"Done," said the lawyer, laughing heartily; "you shall have it, and more besides."

"What do you think now?" asked Bellew, as they turned away. "Do you believe you found a clue in the costumer's shop?"

"A lawyer, Teddy, is a man who never jumps at a conclusion."

"No; well, I'm not a lawyer, you know, and I don't mind telling you what I think about it. I'm awfully afraid Pollie was one of Jeakles' juveniles, and if she was—alas for her pedigree."

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. JEAKLES AND WIFE.

MR. WIVERLY's dispatch went flying over the wires to Chicago, and was delivered to Captain Turtle as he stood in the little dressing-room

of "Jeakles' Hippodrome and Flying Trapeze Company."

As Mr. Wiverly's dispatch was delivered to him, he thrust the yellow missive into his pocket unopened.

Other affairs more exciting than telegrams were on hand now, and claimed his attention. A shover of the "queer," who had eluded capture successfully for some time, had been run down at last, and now sat in the showman's tent within a stone's throw of the officer himself.

The Captain's attention had been drawn to this case by a complaint preferred by the proprietor of the circus.

The showman claimed that at different times a certain party purchased tickets to his entertainment, each time proffering in payment a fifty-dollar bill. As the counterfeit bills were an excellent imitation of the genuine, and required an expert to detect the difference, the circus man had found himself swindled out of the price of his tickets, and of the good money he had used in change.

"I shouldn't so much mind the loss of the money, but for the fact that we've been a-playin' to hard luck, and I'm back on the salaries.

As a perfectly natural consequence, if I don't come down with the stamps the performers will cut stick and caper away. And I can't come down with the stamps when that villain has got 'em all in his pocket," said Mr. Jeakles in the officer's ear, as they stood behind the curtain of the dressing-room and peered out into the audience.

"We'll make him shell out."

The showman shook his big red head.

"I ain't expectin' such a piece of good forchin as that would be, sir," said Mr. Jeakles, in a desponding tone. "Everything is goin' to the bad, so far as I'm concerned. The first thirty-one years of my life I was somebody—I wuz the celebrated Major Domo, the king of all the Liliputs in this here blarsted Ham-merican country. I could command my own terms then, and made money. But at thirty-one years of age bad luck set in, and I begun a-growin'. In one year I growed too big for my business, and rooined myself.

"It's an orful thing to say, but it is true, for as soon as I had growed too big to be of any use as a Lili-put it wuz my blamed luck to stop a-growin' right there. So here I

am, a sort of a betwixt and a be-tween, too little to be a man, and too big to be a drorf—the werry worst fix wot a chap can be in."

Tears of rage stood in Mr. Jeakles' small blue eyes.

"But if bad luck would stop now, I wouldn't complain. Not I; but, when it rains villains, and pours down wagabonds, who rake out my hard-earned dollars, as has been my experience of late, sir, it's discouragin'—werry."

"You've my deepest sympathy," said the Captain, soothingly.

"And if that air wagabond does get away with my money I'm a busted community. All I've got air them seven wite mules over yonder—wot does the hippodromin'—seven eddyicated, walable mules, wot I love as I love my life. But the company will attach 'em unless I come down with the salaries."

"Don't worry, Mr. Jeakles; we are certain to capture the rascal. I have an eye on him now. My men are posted on the outside, and he cannot possibly get away, except he goes in my company."

"I've my eye on him too," grumbled the dwarf. "It taint a werry big eye, nor a werry pretty

eye, but it's a werry sharp eye—if it's all the same to you, sir."

"Oh, yes!"

"And he's the chap a-sittin' on the front seat yonder—in the mustache and side whiskers. He thinks he's disguised so I won't know 'im, but 'e's mistaken. That are woice o' his and his broken finger would give 'im dead away anywhere."

"You must have observed him closely?"

"Bet your life I did. No man is going to swindle me the way that chap's done and I not take due notice of his ginral arkitekchure. The first bogus money we got set me to thinkin', an' we kept a sharp look-out for the man who offered us fifty-dollar bills. I had lodged a complaint, and when that are chap over there with the woice and the crooked finger shook his fifty-dollar bill under my nose to-night and says 'Ten tickets, Mr. Jeakles, and change for a fifty,' I tumbled to his music, and made up my mind he'd soon pipe to a different tune."

The detective had no idea of disturbing the entertainment by making the capture until the performances were over, unless the intended victim should attempt to leave the

tent, in which case he was obliged to do his duty.

He now slipped down quietly into the audience, and worked his way towards the seat where the rascal was sitting without attracting attention. The show went on according to the programme. Everything was in good order, from the clown who cracked his stale old jokes to the riders who went flying around the sawdust arena in bare legs and tinselled garments. The detective, however, had hardly gotten in the desired place ere the fellow he was watching turned about suddenly and stared him in the face.

With a bound he sprang into the arena, amid the flying mules and the chariot riders.

"Stop thief!" cried the Captain, giving chase.

Instantly there was the wildest confusion. The frightened animals tore about the ring, regardless of the cries of the drivers, and the audience rushed pell-mell to the places of exit.

A moment more and the flying villain would have gained the outer edge of the tent, when with a scream the wife of the showman flung herself upon him, and, clasping him

tightly by the neck, hung there, dead weight.

“Hug him, Mrs. Jeakles!” howled the showman, capering wildly around the couple; “hug him, Sairy Ann. Hug him for his mother and his sister, and any other man. Put in your best licks, old girl. Hug him tighter.”

But, quick as the escaping rascal had been in his motions, the Captain was equally lightning-like in the rapidity with which he had given chase. As Mrs. Jeakles threw herself upon him, Captain Turtle had also seized the wretch by the collar.

“You are my prisoner!” said the detective.

“Not yet, my hearty. You will smile, you will, when you take Boston Billy in out of the cold; and don’t you forget it.”

“Do your jooty, Mrs. Jeakles,” shrieked the dwarf, his bells jingling merrily and his wand waving as he pranced about the struggling trio; “hug him, Mrs. Jeakles.”

“D—n the woman!” cried the prisoner, striking her a stunning blow with his clinched fist.

Mrs. Jeakles gave a piercing cry and sank insensible to the ground.

At that moment the iron brace-

lets clicked as they were snapped upon his wrists.

“You did do it,” growled the prisoner, as the click of the iron told him the jig was up; “but you had your hands full. Only for that woman,” spurning the unconscious form with his foot, “I would have shown you the cleanest pair of heels you ever saw in your life.”

The showman flew to the side of his better-half. “Sairy Ann,” cried he in tears, “speak to your own Henery. Speak to Jeakles, love, do.”

He laid her head upon his knee, moaning loudly.

“Sprinkle her face with water,” said the detective. “She will come round all right in a little while.”

“Water,” sobbed the dwarf, tenderly, wiping his wife’s face with his coat-tail. “Water! Now, if you only said oh-de-we, instead of water, *that* would have fetched Sairy Ann. Mrs. Jeakles, sir, is no common female that she should take up with plain water when it’s the oh-de-we that was allus her favourite sup.”

“Well, then, give her a little brandy, if you want to. Somebody bring a little brandy here,” said the detective.

“And a epidemic syringe,” added Mr. Jeakles, mournfully.

"A what?" ejaculated the Captain.

"A epidemic syringe—a werry useful instrument it is too, sir. But p'raps there ain't sich a thing to be found in this here blarsted Hamerican country. If there is, I want it fetched for Sairy Ann."

"An epidemic instrument isn't needed in this case, my good fellow," said a young physician, stepping forward and scrutinizing the fainting woman. "Your wife is coming to all right. See!"

Mrs. Jeakles opened her eyes, and struggled to a sitting posture. Her gaze roved about until it fell upon the prisoner.

"I've got him," she articulated, slowly. "Jeakles, I've got him—the wile villain."

"No, you haven't, Sairy Ann," cried the showman, "but the Captain has, wich is all the same."

"Not quite the same either," growled Boston Billy.

"Ojus retch!" screamed Mrs. Jeakles, struggling to her feet and glaring at the prisoner; "let me at him, and his own mother won't know him in two minutes. Let me at him, I say; I'm a-spilin' for it."

Captain Turtle took the prisoner by the arm and walked him off. Turning to the showman, he said:

"I shall see this fellow lodged behind the bars. You must not fail to appear against him at the trial, which will be soon."

"Jeakles knows no such word as fail," retorted the showman, snapping his fingers airily in the prisoner's face. "I'll be there fast enough."

The detective marched the rogue away. It was not until he had lodged him in a prison cell that he thought of the unopened telegram in his coat-pocket.

He tore it open and read:

"A great case awaits you. Twenty thousand dollars reward in case you succeed. Liberal allowance for services rendered, should you fail. Come at once."

"WIVERLY & WOPPING,
"Attorneys and Counsellors at Law."

He went directly to a telegraph office, and sent the single word:

"Coming.

"TURTLE."

CHAPTER IX.

TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS
REWARD.

A WEEK had passed. The body of the late master of Rokewood had been laid away for ever in the family vault under Rokewood chapel. The dead man had been carried to his long home attended by all the pomp and ceremony befitting the high position and enormous wealth that had been his in life. The velvet-covered bier, the sombre hearse, the long train of funeral carriages, had played their several parts and gone.

Dead to the world, dead to his vengeance, Rokewood now slept the untroubled sleep of death.

A week had passed, and to Mr. Wiverly it had seemed a long one. The detective's telegram had been delivered, and he was hourly expected. Mr. Wiverly now sat in his office, with his feet resting comfortably on the top of a high stool, puffing away at his cigar.

Now, through the clouds of smoke that closed in and around the rotund figure of the genial attorney came a new arrival upon the scene.

"I have called to see a gentleman who sent a telegram to Chicago last Tuesday," said a low voice.

Mr. Wiverly started up; he peered through the dense rings of blue smoke at a stranger who had quietly entered the office.

"You are not the great Chicago detective?" ejaculated Wiverly, extending his hand.

"I am Captain Turtle."

"Glad to see you, Captain. Sit down; my partner will soon be in."

"Let us proceed immediately with the business which brings me here," said the detective, taking a seat. "Business before pleasure is the rule with me."

"Right, sir, and so it should be with us all," returned the lawyer, throwing down his cigar, and opening a window.

"I saw some bills, while on my way here, which I suppose refers to the case I am to be employed upon," said the great detective, laying a paper upon the table.

Wiverly picked it up. It was a small poster, fresh from the press. The ink upon it was not yet dry. In great black letters was printed;

“TWENTY THOUSAND
DOLLARS REWARD

for information that will lead to a discovery of Catherine Rokewood and her child, who escaped from Wansmore Prison, Nov. 10, A.D. 1860. We will pay twenty thousand dollars reward. For particulars address

“WIVERLY & WOPPING,
“Attorneys and Counsellors at Law,
“Hampton, W. Va.”

Wiverly laid the bill down.

“You are right; it does.”

“Give me the outline of the story,” said the Captain, sitting down at the table.

“It is a long one,” said Wiverly, “and runs back for a period of nearly twenty years. I confess to you, in the start, that there is but the faintest prospect of ultimate success. You see, I am frank with you.”

“I expect you to be so,” said the detective; “and, indeed, will not undertake the case unless you are.”

“Good! But, as it is my hour for lunch, suppose we have it served here. The story will sound none the worse for being told over a bottle of wine. And, if I mistake not, you have not dined. Be my

guest for the time being. I won’t promise you a treat in anything but the story, however.”

“Done,” laughed the detective. “I only stipulate that there shall be no delay in telling the tale. I am anxious to hear it at once.”

Wiverly rose quickly, and, going out into the passage, called out:

“Hullo, there! Bane, come down here a moment. I want you.”

A faint answer sounded down the staircase, and presently the ill-clad figure of the Nobody shuffled down the stairway, shuffled along the passage, and finally shuffled itself in at the office door.

“Take this bill, Matthew,” said the lawyer, not unkindly, “and bring me luncheon for three people. Get a bottle or two of the best wine, and be back as soon as possible.”

The Captain eyed the Nobody curiously as he slunk away.

“You keep a man, do you?” said he.

“No. Bane does errands for us occasionally. He’s poorer than a church mouse, and glad to do anything that comes in his way. He is a fixture of this old court, and has been here so long he might well be called the father of the lodgings. But he is in his decline now, and

has about come to the end of his rope, as the saying is. Wopping, my partner, has been making a study of him these last ten years, but I doubt if he has learned even the first page of Bane's peculiar character. One might as well try to solve the eternal mystery of the Pyramids as to fathom the depths of that strange nature."

Bane was back again presently with the luncheon.

"You may spread it on the other table," said Wiverly, "and sit down with us, Bane. This gentleman is the famous detective, Captain Turtle, of Chicago."

Bane started at this information, and stared hard at the detective through the green glasses that covered his eyes.

He half turned to the open door, as if he would leave the room; but, thinking better of it, sat down feebly in a chair by the table, the sickly yellow of his complexion turning to a sicklier yellow still.

The Captain could not help but see the effect his presence produced upon the strange creature before him.

"Don't be scared," said he, laughing; "it is only rogues who need to fear me, and I am sure you are no rogue."

"No," faltered Bane, shaking his head, "I am no rogue."

"No one in the land is readier than Captain Turtle to take a poor man by the hand," continued the detective, cheerily. "Here's luck to you, and better fortune."

He crushed in his own big, warm palm the frail and trembling hand the Nobody extended to him.

"Let us eat and drink to our success in the great Rokewood case," cried Wiverly, pouring out some wine.

Bane became actually ghastly.

Captain Turtle was watching the wretched creature curiously. He could not account for the peculiar feeling Bane aroused within him.

"You are bound to reopen that dead-and-gone mystery, are you?" said the Nobody, in a low voice.

"We must," said Wiverly, briskly; "we are bound to find the heiress of Rokewood, and to do so must of course first find the mother."

"You will fail," said Bane, with an air of conviction. "Twenty years ago the best detectives in the country were after her, without success. The trail she might have left behind her is too cold now for you to expect anything but the direst failure."

"The detective system of twenty

years ago cannot be compared with the system of to-day," said the Captain. "Somehow I feel in my soul that I shall bring the Rokewood case to a successful termination."

Bane choked, and rose from the table.

"What new clues have you picked up at this late day?" asked Bane.

His voice was muffled and unsteady.

"None, Matthew—none whatever," said the lawyer, cheerfully. "As managers of the Rokewood estate it is our duty to find the heir, if possible. We have employed Captain Turtle to go over the case again—not expecting he will succeed, however, in finding one who is so hopelessly lost. Undoubtedly he will fail, as all others have failed before him; but we must do what we can."

Captain Turtle saw the furtive glance shot at him by the Nobody. Bane shivered and shrunk away in his ill-fitting garments, as if he would thus hide himself from sight. The detective was watching him closely, and the outcast, seeming to feel that steady stare, turned upon him with sudden anger.

"So you hunt women as well as

men, do you?" he snarled. "And you would set yourself upon the trail of a lost and miserable wretch like Catherine Rokewood, and bring her to the gallows for the sake of earning a little money? For shame!"

"Bane, you are unreasonable," said the lawyer. "Catherine's child is now the heir to a magnificent fortune. It would be criminal for us to sit down and fold our hands and let the money go to the bow-wows without making an effort to find the heir, and we don't propose to do so."

Bane pushed his old felt hat down hard upon his head. His hand fluttered to his heart and rested there an instant, as though he had been stung by a sudden pain. Then he shuffled, in his old laborious fashion, to the door.

"You are resorting to subterfuge," said he, hoarsely, "to mean, low subterfuge, and you know it. You know that by this time Catherine Rokewood's child is beyond the want of mere money."

"You speak positively," said the Captain. "It is possible that you have authority for making such assertions? Now, if you have, and will give me but the merest hint by

which I may make a start in the right direction, I'll cry halves with you in the reward."

Bane's wretched form seemed convulsed by some strong and violent emotion. "Not I," he muttered, menacingly. "Not I. Poor as I am, ill as I am, and shall always be during the few more years I have to live, there is no sum you could mention that would induce me for a moment to betray the woman you seek, supposing I could do so." He burst into a violent fit of coughing, so prolonged and severe that the good-natured attorney was alarmed.

"There, there, Bane," cried Wiverly, "don't excite yourself unnecessarily. Of course you don't know anything about where she is; I only wish you might. Take a sip of wine—that's a good fellow."

Bane motioned the glass away indignantly, and, slinking out of the room, passed on into the open street.

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CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF CATHERINE ROKEWOOD.

"YOUR Matthew Bane interests me," said the detective, as they found themselves once more alone. "To me he seems to be acting a part, and I believe he knows more of the person you are seeking than he likes to admit."

Wiverly roared with laughter.

"You're 'off,' Captain; you're all 'off,' by the great horn spoon, you are."

"How do you explain his sudden anger at the bare mention of the Rokewood case?"

"Easily enough. As I understand it, Bane used to be a lover of hers, and, like some strange natures, he has not outlived his passion; but, in spite of the ignominy and disgrace which clouds her brief career, he is still faithful to her memory. A dozen years ago, when her father's property reverted to her, Bane openly rejoiced, and wished he could take it to her with his own hands."

"Her father's property? How much was it?"

"Five hundred thousand--just."

"Worth looking after. It is to her own interests, then, as well as to the interests of her child, that she should be found."

"On the contrary, it is to her greatest interest to remain hidden."

"Why?"

"By Jove! when she ran off, twenty years ago, she was under sentence of death. She dare not return."

"Go on."

"Old man Rokewood himself was her deadliest enemy, and he swore she should hang if he had to compass the earth to bring it about. You see, Catherine Deane was the daughter of Major Deane, of the Willows. She was an only child, and the Major thought her the very 'apple of his eye.' She was the greatest belle this part of the world ever had. There wasn't much but what Catherine Deane could do. Like all our Southern young ladies, the Major's daughter was a fearless rider, and the prettiest sight I ever remember to have seen was Miss Kate when, with her father, she rode after the hounds. By Jove! she could take a fence, or a stone wall, or a ditch with any of them. She had a peculiar style of beauty, being

very tall for a woman, and slender as a reed, and she had the longest and thickest hair I ever saw on a woman's head. It was the colour of flax and soft as silk, and when she would let it down, as she sometimes did, it covered her from head to heel like a fleece. I never saw that flaxen banner of hers but it put me in mind of the story of the Lady Godiva, who rode through the streets of Coventry enveloped in a mantle of her own thick hair.

"Well, Catherine Deane lived a merry life and a happy enough life until her eighteenth year. She rode, and sang, and danced, and had her own wild will until then, and then she met Jerome Rokewood. Jerome was an only child, and as high-spirited and headstrong as all only sons usually are. Every luxury that his father's enormous wealth could give to him was his. Every advantage that money and high position could command was lavished upon him. He never knew what it was to have a wish ungratified or a want denied until he met Catherine Deane.

"Between the Deanes and the Rokewoods existed a deadly feud—a feud that had been handed down from father to son for more than a

hundred years. It had existed for generations, and the deadliest hatred for each other rankled in the hearts of the older members of each family.

It was the year previous to the beginning of the great war that Jerome came home from Europe, a gay young gentleman, handsome and fascinating to a degree. Catherine at that time was one of the reigning belles of Newport. Her beauty, her grace, her wealth, placed her second to none. Jerome determined, unluckily, to make a tour of the American watering-places. He had brought a small party of friends with him from the Old World, to whom he wished to show the famous and celebrated places of his native land.

"At Newport he met Catherine Deane. In an unguarded moment young Rokewood sought an introduction to the beautiful daughter of his own and his father's enemy.

"It proved to be a case of mutual love at first sight, and the sequel was a surreptitious marriage.

"Not doubting that their parents would forgive them for their hasty action the pair went quietly home and announced their marriage. Major Deane, in the first furious outburst

of his passion, thrust his motherless child from his door, and swore he would never acknowledge her again.

"He followed this act up by rushing away to his lawyer that night, and making a will in which he cut her off without a penny. In less than a week he met his death by a fall from his horse. He died, leaving his money, a million or more, as a fund for the establishment of a home for indigent old men. However, owing to some mismanagement on the part of the directors, who failed to comply with some of its requirements, the will was eventually pronounced null and void, and the property reverted to the natural heir. It has been accumulating all these years, for Mrs. Rokewood has never put in a claim for a penny of it. Under existing circumstances she dare not. No woman with a price on her life is likely to put in a claim for money, if by so doing her safety is endangered. There has been a standing reward for her capture these many years, and she knows it. It was thought by many, when her father disinherited her for marrying the man he hated so bitterly, that her father-in-law would take up the cudgel in her defence.

" But nothing of the sort.

" If Major Deane's rage had been something awful to witness upon being told of his child's marriage to the son of his sworn enemy that of the elder Rokewood was tenfold. He did not seem to blame his son for any part of it, but poured out the vials of his wrath upon the defenceless head of the poor young wife. He not only cursed her, but he called her the vilest names ; told her she was an adventuress, a wanton thing, and he swore that, come what would, the marriage should be annulled and his son sent abroad.

" She had a high spirit. All the Deanes had been celebrated for their unconquerable spirit, but Rokewood's curses crushed her into the dust. As a natural sequence, Jerome stood by his wife, and openly defied his father to separate them. In this crisis it was brought in evidence later that Catherine had seized a pistol and fired it, the ball piercing young Rokewood to the heart.

" Beside himself, Rokewood had her arrested—charging her with the crime of murder. From the beginning of her trial to the very end he was her most bitter enemy. He

left no stone unturned in order to secure her conviction, and he testified solemnly in court that she had not only killed her husband but had threatened to shoot himself as well.

" No woman ever found so vindictive, so desperate a foe as Catherine found in the person of her husband's father. He pursued her with a relentless hate that was appalling. From the very first he swore she should expiate her crime on the gallows, and when he rose up in that crowded court-room, and took his solemn oath that she had fired at her husband with the avowed intention of committing murder, there was no hope for her.

" There was not a soul she could summon to testify for her—not one. She told her simple story, how she had grasped the pistol—being desperate—and pointing it at her own breast, had threatened to take her own life—how Jerome had seized it, and at the instant had fallen a corpse at her feet.

" She was without relatives or friends—not a soul to stand up in her defence. Her lawyers did what they could for her, but their efforts availed nothing.

" If I should live a thousand years I could not forget that terrible

court-room, packed to its utmost capacity, and that death-white girlish face in the prisoner's dock, as the Judge sentenced her to suffer the extreme penalty of the law. It was horrible ! horrible ! It seemed at first as though she did not understand ; then, as his meaning grew clear to her, she rose up, and, flinging her arms above her head, gave vent to a shriek that sometimes rings in my ears yet. I don't wonder that Rokewood thought he heard that terrible cry on his death-bed. It ought to ring in his ears through eternity. Many people at the time condemned the Judge openly for the severity of his sentence, and vowed that it was Rokewood's money and Rokewood's influence that had bought the sentence. But there was no proof that such was the case. Assertions are one thing, and evidence another, you know.

"Well, she was sentenced, and the sentence was to have taken effect on the eleventh day of November, but before that day arrived it was apparent to everybody that the unhappy girl was to become a mother. The law stepped in here, and a respite was granted her. The law sometimes murders the innocent, but such cases are

not intentional, you know. The delay threw Rokewood into paroxysms of rage. He vowed it was a concocted plan of the prison officials to evade carrying out the full letter of the law, and he declared she should eventually hang if he had to compass heaven and earth to bring it about.

"A week from the day that was to have been her last one in this world Catherine gave birth to a female child.

"People now thought that the child would soften the heart of the implacable old man ; but it did not ; if anything, the birth of the child excited him to more determined efforts against the mother. Catherine's conduct while in prison was such that it won her many friends among the officials.

"She was very quiet and gentle ; the fiery troubles she had passed through seemed to have crushed her proud heart to the dust.

"As she regained her strength Rokewood began to worry the judges with his importunities, demanding that the sentence should now be carried out. Once more the day was appointed. A feeling of horror at her approaching doom at last seemed to stir the hearts of the

people ; a petition for pardon was circulated through the country, and scores of people signed their names to it ; some of the best known citizens in the State too ; but Rokewood fought it out step by step ; he fought it from its inception at Wansmore Court House until it went to the Governor's office. And he did not stop there ; he followed that plea for mercy inside the Governor's gates, disputing the justice of its appeal ; and he disputed it with such terrible force that, at the last moment, the paper was returned to the petitioners *unsigned*. The people had their revenge, however, for Governor X—— was so badly beaten in his race for office at the ensuing election that he never realized he had been a candidate at all, and from that time to this he has been as dead, politically, as Julius Cæsar.

"There was now no help for the wretched Catherine Rokewood. I visited her in her prison cell a few days before the one set for the execution, and I told her anything man could do for her I would do. I asked her what provision she intended to make for her child, and, as I knew her to be penniless at that time, her father having willed

away his property from her, I offered to take that child and see that it was cared for ; but she wouldn't listen to me. All she would say was, 'I know you are Rokewood's lawyer, and I cannot trust you.' By Jove ! it stung me to the quick ; but there was no help for it. Well, the morning came on which she was to die. It was a cheerless November day, with leaden skies and a slow-dropping, sullen rain, as if the very heavens protested against the deed that was to be done. At six o'clock that morning the warden unlocked the door of Catherine's cell. It was empty !

"The prisoner was gone, she and her child, slick and clean, leaving not one trace behind.

"The news of her escape went like wild-fire over the city. Officers were immediately sent out in every direction. Rokewood himself was like a madman. He caused immense posters to be scattered broadcast over the city, giving a minute description of the prisoner and her child, and offered ten thousand dollars reward for her capture. Every effort was in vain. She had disappeared as effectually as if the earth had opened and taken her in. Even the leaf of the prison register

on which was recorded the birth of the infant was torn out and gone."

Mr. Wiverly paused in his long story, and gazed pensively at his boots for a moment.

"She must have had assistance in leaving the prison," said the detective. "There must have been some friend inside the prison walls powerful enough to unlock the barred door, and make it possible for her to escape. The question is, who was that friend?"

Wiverly's eyes twinkled.

"There was a wild tale," said he, with a sly smile curling the corners of his mouth, "that the prison matron acted the part of a rescuing friend to the wretched prisoner. It is certain, at least, that the matron did not deny having done so. It was even whispered that the matron had not only helped the girl to escape, but that she had provided a disguise and a supply of money and let her out of the jail by means of false keys, misrepresentation, and such other arts as she had at her command. It was suspected, too, that a certain warden, who was desirous of standing well in the matron's good graces, had lent a helping hand, and that he had winked at a certain tall figure which

had passed him by in the dead of night, attired in the matron's gown and bearing a basket of linen, apparently, on her arm. The warden had winked at the ceiling as this figure passed him unquestioned. But the law, you know, could not 'wink' at the dereliction of its servants, and, in consequence, the matron was speedily relieved from the responsibilities of her position, and the warden likewise. It is said, however, that the erring pair suffered but little inconvenience at their hasty dismissal from office. They were immediately married, and the misguided public not only applauded their performance but made up a substantial purse and presented it to them as a sort of memorial. If I mistake not, Mr. Wopping added a hundred-dollar contribution to this purse, and in one of his mistaken moments charged the same to the firm of Wiverly & Wopping.

"One by one I must pick up the threads of this strange affair, and go carefully over every detail by itself. I must find that prison matron."

"There's nothing easier," said Wiverly, calmly. "To my certain knowledge she has been lying by the side of her husband, the warden,

in Wansmore Cemetery for the past eighteen years. They were both carried off about the same time by diphtheria, and I don't believe that either of them can have gotten away."

Mr. Wiverly smiled aloud at his ghastly little joke.

"Perhaps, Captain, you don't believe in making light of grave subjects? I beg your pardon," said Wiverly, seeing the detective did not echo his mirth.

"I am too much in earnest in this case to find anything to laugh at in a statement which deprives me of those who must have proved to be of valuable assistance in unravelling the mystery of Catherine Rokewood. As it now is, the obstacles which surround the case seem to be almost unsurmountable. Still I don't despair. My professional reputation is now at stake, and I feel that in the end I must and will succeed."

"Don't expect too much," said Wiverly. "Remember that nearly twenty years have elapsed since she escaped from her prison cell, and that, when she slipped away, she left not the slightest trace behind her. Remember the changes wrought immediately after her flight by the great war, which ensued the follow-

ing year, and don't expect success. But there is one point I have lately discovered, which, I think, would be well to follow up."

"And that?" asked the detective, eagerly.

"Before his death Rokewood dropped certain words which led me to suspect that perhaps Catherine might not be guilty of her husband's death. To be sure, it is only a suspicion with me. At no time during her trial and incarceration in prison did she make a denial of the shooting. She claimed that it was done by an accidental discharge of the weapon. Rokewood testified solemnly to the contrary, and declared it was wilful murder.

"On his death-bed Rokewood dropped several words which but for certain circumstances I should have regarded as the wild vagaries of a mind diseased by long illness; words little enough in themselves, yet when taken as a whole, fraught with terrible meaning, and which pointed to the unmistakable conclusion that Catherine must be innocent of the crime he had charged her with.

"Whatever the secret was Rokewood died possessed of—and secret I am convinced there really was—is

shared to-day by the servant, Marley. If we could make that secret yield us up the proof of Catherine's innocence, as I hope and believe it must, the rest would be comparatively easy. A pardon by the Governor could not then be refused, in which case Catherine herself might step forward without fear, and she would do so in all probability."

"It is a sad case," said the detective.

"It is, indeed," returned Wiverly, quickly, "and it has a most discouraging outlook now, I admit. But I want you to do your very best for us."

Captain Turtle rose and paced the floor. "I must have the widest latitude in which to prosecute my researches. No man, woman or child must be exempt from any inquiries I may wish to put to them."

"Certainly not," said Wiverly, "not even poor old Matthew Bane. And as to Marley, he is in charge of Rokewood House, and, if you like, you shall be domiciled under the same roof with him until you have wormed his secret from him."

"I accept the offer," said the Captain. "In return, I have a request to make of you, which you may deem a foolish one. Still, to

my mind, it is one of importance, and that is——"

"Granted before it is preferred," said Wiverly, hastily.

"My request is," said the detective, quietly, "that, no matter what the provocation shall be, you will carefully keep every scrap of information about my proceedings in the Rokewood case from Matthew Bane."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TROUBLES OF MISS POLLIE WARDLAW.

MISS POLLIE WARDLAW sat in her maiden bower. The various paraphernalia usually belonging to pretty girls like Miss Pollie now littered the chairs and table, and were spread out on the full, white bed whereon our young lady was wont to court nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep.

From present indications, however, Miss Pollie evidently had no intention of wooing the soothing charms of the drowsy god. She was certainly very wide-awake, and a peculiar sparkle in her big blue eyes indicated plainly enough that there was trouble ahead for some-

body. She was holding a note in her hand—a note that had been read and flung to the floor, and which, in a spasm of passionate rage, had been ground wickedly under Miss Pollie's heels. However, from this ignominious position the offending missive had been rescued, only to be read with greater indignation on the part of Miss Wardlaw, with a hasty collection of various bags and boxes as a result.

These bags and boxes were Miss Pollie's storehouses, as it were, and she now set about cramming into their yawning maws the various odds and ends that constituted her "belongings."

"If I had been born a somebody, or as homely as the witches we read of, or, better still, had not been born at all, how much worry would have been spared me!" soliloquized she, peeping sidewise into a little mirror on her dressing bureau, and winking slyly at the reflection she saw there. There was a wrinkle of discontent on the pretty white forehead, and a sarcastic curve to the mouth usually so smiling.

Miss Wardlaw snapped a pair of pink-tipped fingers at her image in the mirror.

"Here you are," she said with some indignation, addressing the image in the glass. "Here you are, Pollie Wardlaw, born to circumstances that do not fit you at all, born with a personal appearance that is a daily detriment to your getting on in life; and worse than either, and both combined, born a nobody of the very first water. For shame, for shame! How could you do it?" Miss Pollie suddenly turned herself about, and folding up a white woollen gown put it into one of the packing cases. As she did so, a photograph dropped from its folds. She picked it up.

"Poor Teddy," said she, plaintively apostrophizing the pictured face, "Poor Teddy. How can I give you up? How can I promise that cruel old papa of yours that I will never see you again? I cannot, and, what is more, I—" Miss Pollie picked up the offending letter again, and glanced down its closely-written pages. A flush rose to her cheek; her eyes sparkled.

"I won't promise!" shutting her teeth tightly. "The mean old thing. I will go away if that will please him. I intended to do so anyway; but, I never will give up

Teddy." She placed the letter under a paper weight—Teddy's gift—and went on with her packing.

Miss Pollie was usually a very even-tempered young lady, but now she was certainly very much "out of sorts."

She had this advantage, however. No matter what her mood happened to be, her admirers were wont to declare her to be twice as pretty in the last as in the one preceding, and if her eyes now sparkled with angry passion, and her colour rose as she whisked the various articles of her not too extensive wardrobe into the boxes, there was this about it—Pollie Wardlaw angry was twice as distractingly pretty as Pollie Wardlaw pleased.

The letter that had roused her just wrath was now spread out on the little table in plain view. It was written in a plain, bold hand, and bore the usual printed head common to all business houses. It read :

"MISS POLLIE WARDLAW :

"As I have recently been informed by Mr. Bellew, Sr., of your outrageous attempt to inveigle his son into a marriage with yourself, and of the extremely unladylike and forward manner in which it is said you seek to attract the atten-

tion of marriageable gentlemen in general, I herewith take this present opportunity to inform you that hereafter your services will not be required at my house. Believing heartily that the members of every class in society should carefully keep within the boundaries which must necessarily hedge that class around, you can imagine, perhaps, something of the horror of my feelings upon being made acquainted with your late desperate efforts towards bettering your social position by inveigling young Mr. Bellew into a marriage. At the same time, it was with unspeakable satisfaction that I learned your efforts had proved futile, and that, to further the separation, and erase from his mind any favourable impression you may have made upon it, young Mr. Bellew is to be sent on a tour of the continent—immediately !

"Inclosed you will please find check for forty dollars, which amount is due to you, I believe, for your services as music instructress to my daughters, Miss Pummie and Miss Maude. Yours, in hopes of a speedy reformation in your conduct,

"H. BOLTON.

"Of the firm of Bolton & Bellew, bankers."

No wonder the letter had made Miss Pollie very angry. It was a letter that would have roused the just wrath of even a milder-dispositioned person than Miss Wardlaw, and Miss Wardlaw really had quite a fine, high-strung temper of her own that required all her efforts to keep it under proper control.

"If the natures of men and women were different," soliloquized Pollie, folding a long night-gown and spatting it down into its own particular niche in the packing-box, "or if I were as thin, and plain, and altogether odious as Mr. Bolton's daughters—Miss Pummie and Miss Maude—all this trouble never would have been. Teddy never would have given me the second glance, and I don't suppose that I should have ever realized that a gentleman of his description existed at all."

Miss Wardlaw walked up to her mirror and contemplated herself critically:

"Now, if I were ambitious and had manœuvred to catch—odious word—a rich man's son, Mr. Bolton's effusion would not be so much out of reason. But when I remember, as I well do remember, the way Teddy followed me up and

persisted in offering me his attentions in the very face and eyes of everybody, it seems hard that I should be the target at which evil-minded people can aim such contemptible arrows as the ones Mr. Bolton shoots at me in his letter."

Pollie still stared at the reflection she saw in the mirror. Perhaps it interested her; perhaps not. Anyway, she was still looking reflectively at the indignant young face before her, when a little tap came on her bedroom door, and the little maid-of-all-work cried out :

"A gentleman in the parlour to see you, Miss Wardlaw."

Pollie straightened her collar and went down. Bellew came forward to meet her as she entered the room.

"Oh, Pollie!"

"I'm awfully vexed," said she, going directly to him. "Teddy, what made you come here?"

"What made me?" cried Bellew, opening his eyes. "Why, *you* did. Don't you know, Pollie, that you are the magnet that draws me in this direction, and, for that matter, could draw me anywhere you chose to?"

Pollie pretended that she didn't hear,

"I'm going away, Teddy," said she, somewhat irrelevantly.

"I am certain to go with you, then."

"Not you," cried Polly, quickly. "I am going simply to be rid of you, sir."

"What a little vixen it is!" said Bellew, slipping an arm about her waist. "And what land does it intend to fly away to, and when is the flitting to take place? I have read somewhere that migratory birds have certain seasons in the year for travelling. I suppose Pollie Wardlaw has the same?"

"Do you know," said Pollie, suddenly, beginning to cry, "that your Mr. Bolton is the meanest—the very meanest—creature on top of the whole earth?"

"Bolton!" ejaculated Bellew, surprised. "What has Bolton to do with us?"

"And he has written the worst letter to me that one person can write to another. He says your father is about to send you on the continent."

"Well?"

"Well!" mimicked Pollie. "You can stay at home, for I am going away instead, and I shall not return."

"Yes, you will," said Teddy, with calm assurance. "You will come back in less than no time as Mrs. Bellew, Jr. See if you don't."

"Not I," cried Miss Wardlaw, crying in earnest. "If you will read Mr. Bolton's apt remarks on class distinctions, you cannot fail to observe how vastly improper a marriage with me would be."

"Who cares a rush for Bolton's opinion!" remarked Teddy, politely. "His talk about class distinctions in this blessed country is all bosh, and he knows it. I've the best notion a man ever had to go and punch his head for him."

"And I cannot deny that I should like very much to see it done," said Miss Wardlaw, pensively.

"What about this nonsensical journey you are talking of?" asked Bellew.

"What about your nonsensical journey?" said Pollie. "Mr. Bolton says you have promised your father that you will certainly go on the continent."

Bellew burst out laughing.

"I did promise father that I would go away for a time, and I intend to do it. But as there was no prescribed country laid out for

me to journey in, I have decided that a little tour over certain portions of the North American continent will suffice."

Miss Wardlaw laughed.

"Besides, since Mr. Wopping has consented to take up your case, I should not be surprised at any moment to hear that he had discovered a pedigree for you, dating clear back to Adam's time, and I want to be around here when that happens. You remember, don't you, what you have promised in case of such an event?"

"Really," cried Pollie, perversely, "I cannot say that I do."

"Pollie."

"Well, then, one isn't likely to forget, particularly if there is somebody about to occasionally jog one's memory," said Polly with asperity.

"It is a little vixen," cried Bellew, apparently addressing his remarks to the ceiling, and gaily marching his angry fiancée forward and backward across the room. "It is a little, scolding, perverse creature, and I always said so."

"You must go, Teddy," said Pollie, struggling to free herself. "There's all my packing to be done yet, and the carriage is ordered for me at half-past two exactly."

"Tell me where you are going, dear."

"Only into the country," a little penitently.

"Too indefinite by half," remonstrated the imperturbable Teddy. "Considering the fact that these United States of America run pretty much all to country, don't you think yourself, dear, that your answer is just a trifle too vague? Try and fix the exact locality, love."

"If you really must know," cried Miss Pollie, "I can soon tell you."

"I really must, then," said Bellew.

"Because I've made up my mind, Teddy, that, come what may, I won't write to you, or see you, after to-day. Those odious people of yours, and Mr. Bolton—"

Bellew took her by the hand and led her to a seat. He had never seen Pollie out of temper before, and he did not quite know how to manage this phase of her nature. "Haven't I told you often enough," he said, gently, "that I want you to wed? Are you not my betrothed wife, Pollie, and have I not a little right to know where you intend going in the present instance?"

"Oh, it isn't that," cried Miss

Pollie, her anger giving way suddenly to tears again.

“What then?”

“It is the knowledge that I am a nobody, and always was a nobody, and must always stay a nobody,” cried Miss Wardlaw, hiding her wet face in her lover’s bosom. “Teddy, I can never be your wife. Never! never! never!”

“Never is a very long time, Pollie, and I’m certain that you will consent to marry me sooner than that. Nobody but Pollie Wardlaw herself hinders me from having a wife now,” said Bellew.

“It is very hard to bear, Teddy, but I can never forgive your father and Mr. Bolton—never; and I am going away where they cannot even hear of me.”

“Where will you go, dear?”

“Don’t tell, Teddy,” said Pollie, wiping her wet eyes, “but actually, I am going as companion to an invalid lady who leaves the city at two o’clock for Old Point Comfort. I anticipate a heavenly time.”

“Oh, yes, a perfectly gorgeous time. It will be a picnic and a carnival all in one,” groaned Bellew.

“She said it would be a regular holiday for me, and the salary is

not to be slighted. Anyway, I’ll be away from Mr. Bolton——”

“And me?”

“There must be some bitter with the sweet.”

“You will write to me, Pollie, every day—will you not?”

“Oh, yes.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAPTAIN OPENS THE CASE.

CAPTAIN TURTLE now settled himself down to business. That he had a most difficult case on hand he well understood. But the magnitude of the work before him did not appall him for a moment. The various theories entertained by his predecessors were not given a second thought by the great Chicago detective, who, discarding every opinion but his own, carefully revolved the matter over in his own mind and decided upon the line of conduct best to pursue.

This being the case, the Captain’s first move in the game was to quietly set a watch upon the movements of the people about him.

Without the collusion of some

party or parties who enjoyed the confidence of the two attorneys the detective believed it was impossible for the escaped prisoner to have eluded the vigilance of his brother detectives all these years. Instinctively feeling this to be true, he determined to first find that person who played the part of the friendly spy, and who faithfully transmitted to Mrs. Rokewood every move in the game of pursuit.

He believed Matthew Bane to be this friend.

Accordingly he not only took up his residence in the gloomy house at Rokewood, but for this reason hired a sky-parlour in the old brick lodging-house, similar in size and adjacent to the one occupied by the poor old Nobody, whose better acquaintance he set about cultivating with the utmost assiduity. Bane met these advances with the utmost reserve.

The Captain resorted to various expedients in order to gain Bane's confidence, but all to no avail. Every device by which the wily detective endeavoured to introduce himself into the Nobody's miserable apartment was squarely met with rebuke so decided that at the end of a week's hard endeavour he had

made no nearer acquaintance with the hidden penetralia than the outside of the door that opened into the common passage-way.

As this was welcome to the knowledge of anybody who chose to pass in that direction, he could not congratulate himself upon the success of his efforts.

At the end of the second week he suddenly changed his tactics. He ceased hinting to Bane that he would like to be asked to sit with him, nor did he offer his sympathy with ill-health or fatigue. Instead, he took to waylaying the wretched man upon the stairs, or in the dining-halls, or claimed his attention as he shambled out into the wider refuge of the sunlit streets.

On such occasions the Captain waxed confidential. He told Bane little stories of himself and the people he knew, hoping to draw something similar from the strange creature who so successfully baffled him. It was an unrequited confidence. Bane never relaxed a particle : he never for a moment unbent from that shy, cold manner that seemed to be his second nature. He would listen patiently, but at the same time with an apathy that was only too apparent. The detec-

tive's best jokes never excited a passing interest. Always sad, always repellent, he seemed more like a machine than a living man. The detective met Bane's rebuffs with perfect good-humour, making such changes in his mode of attack as his increasing knowledge of the strange man's nature seemed to warrant.

"He isn't exactly a monster of ingratitude," said the Captain, one day, after Bane had been more than ordinarily frigid; "but he is evidently a man with a mystery. What that mystery is it shall be my business to find out."

Despairing of being invited to enter Bane's room, the detective made a wax impression of the lock, and had some false keys made. He could now enter the forbidden chamber at his leisure, and in one of the infrequent absences of the Nobody, Captain Turtle found his opportunity.

But if the Captain had expected to find any clue in that poor little room that would lead him along by never so tortuous a path to the dead and buried past of the poor wretch whose mystery baffled him—if he expected the least shred of anything by which he might in time lift the

veil that wrapped the poor, plain story of the Nobody's life in obscurity—his expectations were not realized. No scrap of writing met his gaze; no old, forgotten envelope, with its tell-tale postmark; no hidden diary, with its eloquent pages, to tell the story of those long years of isolation and misery.

The Captain's search was close and thorough. Even the shabby little bed was carefully taken apart, piece by piece, and examined with a minuteness that allowed no further concealment of anything which might have been hidden there. But the whole world would have been welcome to the knowledge of all the detective found there. It was evident to his mind that, whatever the reason was for his peculiar mode of life, it was a reason at once so profound, so urgent, so powerful that the Nobody had not dared to retain in his possession a shred of evidence concerning a former and different existence.

Captain Turtle went through the shabby wardrobe. Bit by bit the poor, worn garments were examined, and as carefully returned to their place.

"You are a deep one, Matthew Bane," muttered the detective, tap-

ping his forehead reflectively ; “deep and silent and mysterious as the sea.”

He returned to his own sky parlour, disappointed for the time being, but not discouraged.

There was a scuttle-hole in the ceiling of the detective's room, a small opening through which it was possible he might make his way out upon the flat roof of the building. Once there he could peep down through the little skylight into the Nobody's apartment.

He realized that there were certain advantages to be gained by a proceeding of this kind, advantages not to be despised, and did not hesitate to make the most of his opportunity

By looking down upon Bane when the poor wretch supposed himself to be free from observation, the detective hoped to take him off his guard.

Hearing the door of the Nobody's room open and close again, and the sound of his feet as they went shuffling over the floor, the Captain hastened to make his way through the scuttle-hole and soon crawled out upon the roof. Flattening his body upon the roof, he cautiously approached the skylight.

He waited patiently for developments. It was very late. The city clock had long since tolled the hour of midnight, and Bane's monotonous shuffle still went unceasingly forward and backward across the floor.

Captain Turtle waited more than an hour for the steps to cease.

“Wonder if he never intends going to bed,” muttered the detective, as he glued his eye to a hole in the sash and curiously contemplated the stooping figure in the room below.

But Bane's next movement answered the query.

He went to the door, and carefully examining the fastenings, turned to the bed.

But he did not disrobe.

The detective watched the proceedings of the “Nobody” in sheer amazement. Never in his experience had he met with anything similar to Bane's behaviour.

The poor wretch turned down the blankets, and, without disturbing a single article of his attire, carefully stretched himself upon the bed, and as carefully adjusted the bedding about him.

Captain Turtle was paralyzed.

“Will wonders never cease ?” he

ejaculated, in amazed indignation. "I've seen drunken men go to bed with their boots on, but sober ones never. Whatever else he may do, Bane certainly does not drink." He sought the privacy of his own apartment, and, once there, pushed his hands deep into his breeches pockets, and stared at the wall before him.

"He had on his hat, his coat, his boots—the whole blamed business, as I'm a sinner!"

The detective fetched a long breath, and wagged his head with a thoughtful air as he stepped softly out into the passage. "By the lord Harry," muttered he, "I only suspected something wrong before, but now I know it. When men have no letters of any sort, no mementos, or keepsakes, and who fight shy of company, they're to be looked after. I have my opinion of any man who, drunk or sober, goes to bed with his boots on. Bane is deep—deep! but I swear I will sound his depths yet, before I am done."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAPTAIN MAKES A DISCOVERY.

FOR ten years Bane had served the firm of Fielding & Co., as book-keeper. Wopping had volunteered this information, and the detective acted immediately upon the thought that occurred to him as he heard it.

He determined to interview the members of the firm in whose employ Bane had worked so many years.

To his inquiries Mr. Fielding had said, "We can speak in the highest terms of Mr. Bane's abilities and faithfulness. In the years that he was with us he was never absent a day or an hour from his post of duty; and a better book-keeper than Matthew Bane we have been unable to find to replace him. He was with us a long time, and but for his failing strength would undoubtedly be here still."

"I have some questions to ask you which you may not like to answer, but they are of vital importance," said the detective, showing his badge. "I want to know if he brought references to you?"

"He did, certainly," replied Mr.

Fielding ; "otherwise, we would not have considered his application for the situation."

"Can you give me the names of the parties he referred you to ?"

"I can."

"Did you apply to those parties?"

"We did. They recommended him in the warmest terms, and we found, in the ten or eleven years that he served us, that they had not overrated him in the least."

"Will you give me the address of those parties? Remember, please, that this conversation is confidential, but I don't hesitate telling you that it is an affair of importance."

Mr. Fielding went to a pile of documents that were thrust into the pigeon-hole of his desk, and selecting a card on which was a printed address, gave it to the detective.

"Here is a business card sent us by the firm he came from. I hope there is nothing wrong in Bane's affairs."

"I hope so, too," was the non-committal reply, as the detective walked away.

Captain Turtle returned to the safe retreat of his sky-parlour, and, getting ink and pens and paper

about him, sat down at his table to write, and it was a noticeable fact that he directed his letter to the firm whose address was printed on the card given him by Mr. Fielding.

"Now, Matthew, my cherub," soliloquized the Captain, as he carefully moistened the flap of the envelope in which he had deposited his missive and folded it down to its place; "now, Matthew, my sweet lamb, whatever there is about your past life that you should keep such a close lock on your lips as you now do—whatever your secret may be, and secret there is, I am certain, it will be a secret from me but a little while longer. By return post, my gentle dear, the mystery of Matthew Bane will be as a tale that is told, a mystery that is no more."

However, in the fulness of his faith and the exuberance of his spirit, the wily detective reckoned without his host.

He had marked his letter "private," and he had also inclosed his official card.

The address of the firm to whom he had written was San Francisco, Cal., and naturally enough some little time must elapse ere his letter of inquiry could reach its destina-

tion and be answered. Nearly two weeks passed ere the reply was put in the detective's eager grasp. It was a rather long letter, and covered several pages :

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.,
Oct. 20, 18—.

Captain Turtle—Dear Sir: Yours of the 5th inst. is at hand. In reply, would say the person you speak of, viz., Matthew Bane, served us in the capacity of general agent for a number of years, and continued in our employ until he was obliged by ill-health to seek the beneficial effect of another climate. We found him efficient, prompt, reliable. His disease was rheumatism, and before he left California he had become a hopeless cripple. His habits and mode of life were beyond question. The moroseness of disposition and other peculiarities you complain of were not characteristics of his at the time of our acquaintance with him. He was celebrated then for his cheerfulness and the resignation with which he accepted his fate. He was invariably the life of the company he happened to be thrown in, and I have known him to crack jokes when his physical condition was such that he could not turn

himself in bed without the aid of assistants. You ask if I can give a minute description of his personal appearance—noting particularly any trifling peculiarity that distinguished him. Let me assure you that no person in the world is better qualified to do that than the writer of these lines. We were boys together ; I have known Matthew Bane from his infancy to his manhood, and at any time stand ready to speak a good word for him if necessary. In person he was rather small, inclined to thinness, and of fair complexion, with sandy hair. He was not tall at his best, and after the rheumatism had settled upon him he seemed to shrivel up and shrink away until a child's clothes would have covered him. There is but one peculiarity about him, in the way of physical defect—which, I take it, is what you meant, and that is, his left hand is missing. Years ago, when a lad, he lost that hand in the machinery of his father's mill. As to his people—Matthew Bane has none—with the exception of a third or fourth cousin, to whom he was much attached. In fact, he finally left California in company with his cousin, who is a sort of showman—Jeakles by name. The rest of his people were swept

away by the cholera in 1849. You know, of course, since you seem to be acquainted with Bane, that his family were originally from England. He may possibly have relatives still in that country. In conclusion, let me say that I sincerely hope no other misfortune than his ill-health has come upon my friend Bane; but if there has, he will find friends, and good ones, among his old acquaintances in San Francisco, who will be glad to testify in his behalf at any moment.—Respectfully,

J. B. CONE,
of Cone, Bradlaugh & Co.

The Captain smiled a shrewd, keen smile, that was more like a flash of heat lightning than an expression of merriment.

He put his finger upon a single paragraph, as he laid the letter down upon the table.

“The left hand missing!”

As the great detective read over that apparently harmless statement, the mirthless smile deepened into a burst of triumphant laughter.

“Our Matthew Bane is a fraud,” said he, “and I suspected as much from the very first. Our Matthew Bane is no helpless sufferer from rheumatism. Our Matthew Bane

has the usual complement of hands. Ergo, he is not the Matthew Bane recommended by the San Francisco firm. The question now is, if the man who now calls himself Matthew Bane is not the real Matthew Bane, then *who is he?*”

CHAPTER XIV.

BANE'S DISTRUST.

WHATEVER scruples of delicacy Captain Turtle had felt about forcing the better acquaintance of Matthew Bane were now thrown aside.

If Bane was personating a character that did not belong to him, and the detective now held indubitable proof that such was the fact, there must necessarily be some powerful reason for his doing so.

What that reason was the Captain as yet had not the slightest suspicion. The mere fact that there was a mystery surrounding the poor Nobody filled him with a keen desire to sift it to the bottom, and aroused his professional instincts to their very utmost.

Whatever the mystery was that

Bane was hugging to his bosom, the detective now made up his mind that he would know it too, and he at once decided to hover night and day about the passage leading to Bane's humble rooms.

If the poor Nobody shuffled down the long stairs and out into the noisy streets, the figure of the watchful detective crept slyly along in the rear, stopping far off when the Nobody stopped, and gliding along when the weary shambling walk once more began.

"I don't exactly understand just now where this chase is going to fetch up at," mused the detective as he slunk along in the friendly shadow of a wall, with his eyes fixed on the slow-moving figure in advance of him. "But the more I watch Bane the deeper and more mysterious he seems."

He followed him out from the noise and bustle of the busy town to the quiet of the fields and lanes. He lingered along in the distance, unseen and unsuspected by the poor wretch whose secrets he sought, until he had seen the shambling figure disappear down the winding road that led to Rokewood Chapel.

The Captain waited about until Bane returned. Night had settled

silently down upon the fields and landscape as that poor, crouching figure came once more up the road that led to the town. The detective took up his silent march, and followed the shuffling footsteps as they shuffled their weary way towards the dreary lodgings.

The detective watched the drooping frame as it at last turned into the narrow passage and mounted the dark staircase.

Slipping into a convenient drug shop he purchased a bottle of drops, and hastily followed up the stairs after the retreating figure.

He approached Bane's door and gave a vigorous knock.

There was no reply.

The Captain rapped again, louder than before, and so roughly that the door rattled on its hinges.

"Who is there?" asked a muffled voice.

"I am," cried the detective; "let me in."

"What do you want?" asked Bane.

"Want?" ejaculated the Captain in a tone of simulated indignation. "Now that is a pretty question, isn't it? I want to see you, and you've no objection to that, I hope."

"Thank you; I wish to be alone."

"The deuce you do!" retorted the detective. "But you can't always have what you most desire. Do you know that?"

The Nobody did not reply.

"And if you don't open the door I'll burst it in," said the detective, firmly. "I tell you that I am bound to see you." And he emphasized his words by giving the door a blow that threatened to split the panels.

A key turned in the lock, a bolt shot suddenly back into its socket, the door opened slightly, and the thin form of the Nobody stepped quickly into the passage.

"What is your business with me?" said he in a husky whisper. "What have I done that you should force yourself upon my notice and claim my attention? Begone, and leave me to my loneliness. I am happier so."

The clouded rays of the night-lamp swinging from the dingy ceiling in the passage fell upon the drooping form and made strange, fantastic shadows on the wall.

"Now, see here, Bane," said Captain Turtle, in a conciliatory tone, "don't get up on your high heels because a chap wants to do you a good turn. Be social—for I'm lonesome—and ask me in to sit with you."

Bane carefully locked his door, and put the key in his pocket.

"If that is what you want, you had better go. Matthew Bane asks no one to share his room with him."

He shook as with an ague, as the chill air swept through the passage. The rays of the lamp fell upon the upturned face, and the detective could not but notice how cadaverous and pinched it had grown in a little while.

"I have fetched you a bottle of medicine Mr. Wopping sends, with his request that you give it a trial."

Bane reached out a fragile hand and took the bottle.

"Mr. Wopping is very kind," he said, with cold politeness; "but you, Captain Turtle, are unnecessarily attentive. I could have waited for this until the attorney himself gave it to me."

The Captain planted his back squarely against the wall, and looked at Bane.

"See here, now. You are prejudiced against me, and have been ever since Wiverly was so unfortunate as to disclose my business to you," said the Captain, in an injured tone. "Just because you have taken a fancy to espouse the cause of that wretched Mrs. Rokewood, and that

I am engaged in trying to find her and bring her back here to her home and her friends, you fly up and treat me as if I were a ruffian of the worst order. It isn't fair, Bane ; upon my soul, it isn't."

A shudder ran over the attenuated figure of the Nobody. He glanced at the stout form of the detective, and made a gesture of disgust.

"It is not for Matthew Bane to argue the question of right and wrong with you," said he, feebly ; "not for Matthew Bane. I can only hope and pray and believe that some time—in the fulness of God's eternal mercy and justice—the innocence of that unhappy creature will be made clear to the world as it is to me now. With you it is a question of money. For money you set yourself like a sleuth-hound upon the track of a wronged and wretched creature, with the full knowledge of the fact that when you yield her up to the law the consequence will be the sacrifice of her life. Feeling as I do about this matter, there is small wonder that I regard your efforts with the horror they deserve."

"What if I were to tell you, Bane, that there is now a faint hope of

establishing the innocence you have such faith in ?" said the detective, lightly. "What if I were to tell you that we believe there is a witness who may be brought to testify to the fact that *Catherine Rokewood's pistol never discharged the bullet that took the life of her husband !*"

"Why talk of impossibilities, Captain ?" cried Bane, hoarsely.

"There is no impossibility about it," returned the detective, calm'y. "I tell you there is a witness who could do and who will do it, providing the proper pressure is put upon him and he is made to do it. I'll say right now, Bane, that you will see the day when you will want to take my hand and say, Captain, I have wronged you. So surely as the sun shines, I shall prove to the whole world the innocence of the wronged Catherine Rokewood."

A deep, tremulous sigh shook the bosom of Matthew Bane.

"In that time, if it ever comes, and I live to see it, I will go down upon my knees and kiss the dust from your feet," cried Bane, greatly agitated. "But why talk of that now? Go away and leave me, for I would be alone."

He had moved gradually away from the door of his room, and now

crouched in the shadow of the staircase, his thin fingers clutching at the railing that wound down its cavernous depths to the street below. As he crouched there, the crooping figure—the pinched, cadaverous face, on which death had already set his seal—the trembling, shrinking manner made a picture so powerful, so impressive, that, moved by some indefinable impulse, the wily detective advanced upon it.

“Bane,” cried he, as he started forward, “what and who are you? Tell me, for I will know your secret.”

“My secret!” cried the outcast, shrinking still closer to the shadowy wall. “It is false! Who says I have a secret?”

“I say it,” cried the Captain, clutching at the trembling form. “I say it, Matthew Bane. Why this disguise, this long concealment of your own identity?”

But there was no response. The Nobody dropped silently down into the friendly darkness of the staircase, and a moment later was swallowed up in the endless ebb and flow of the roaring streets.

CHAPTER XV

MISS POLLIE WARDLAW TO MR.
BELLEW, JR.

OLD POINT COMFORT, VA.,
Oct. 18, 18—.

MY OWN DEAR TEDDY:

At last I find myself recovered sufficiently from the fatigues of my recent journey to write you a little letter, trusting that in the never-failing goodness of your disposition you have long since forgiven the slight ebullition of ill-temper on my part which characterized our last interview in the city.

I am well aware of the fact that I promised faithfully to write you immediately upon arriving at our journey's end, but I found it impossible to do so on account of Miss Pennyfeather's many whims. Miss Pennyfeather, you know, is the invalid lady to whom I am acting as companion, nurse, etc., and the situation, I may here remark, is anything but the sinecure I had supposed it would be. But let me not complain; rather let me rejoice at the change. For when I remember the disadvantages under which a poor young girl labours in what would

otherwise have proved a more agreeable employment than the situation of companion to a whimsical lady—disadvantages which render it possible for her to receive such letters as the one Mr. Bolton went to the trouble to write me—to be removed from the possibility of a repetition of the insult is to be considered a matter for congratulation. So congratulate me now, Teddy dear, upon the change in my circumstances, and behold me coming and going at the beck and call of Miss Pennyfeather, with whatever stock of patience there is at my command. If I sometimes wish—as I frequently do wish—that my lady would be a trifle more reasonable in her demands upon my time and my attention, don't argue from this that your poor Pollie is capricious and too difficult to please in a situation.

If I feel—as I often do feel—that the amazing ignorance and indifference displayed by some people for the divine art of music is a desirable indifference—a desirable ignorance—remember that these feelings are only evoked at such times as I have found myself hour after hour at the piano, pounding out hideous accompaniments to the English and

Italian ballads that my voice screeched into the deaf ears of a music-mad mistress.

If I occasionally think, as *I do* think, that the possessor of an obnoxious and altogether hateful idiosyncrasy is not to be pitied so much as are the persons who are obliged for hire to endure the hourly penance of having that obnoxious and hateful idiosyncrasy flaunted eternally before them—and *at* them—let your mind turn for a moment upon the subject of the hideous and disagreeable Scotch pugs, without which no lady is a fashionable lady at the present time. And having done this, know that of all the horrid, abominable creatures of the pug species, the very worst specimen of the whole race adorns the foot of Miss Pennyfeather's bed in the night-time, and rides aloft on the seat beside her when she takes her airing during the day. Hating pug dogs as earnestly as I do, you can imagine what my feelings must be when Pollie is directed to give Fido his perfumed bath at twelve by the clock exactly; or to take the “dear little darling” for a stroll on the beach; or tuck him snugly under his blankets for a “beauty sleep” in the early morn-

ing. But there is compensation, my own. I am far removed from your Mr. Bolton and his two odious daughters—Miss Pummie and Miss Maude—and I am at full liberty to think of you—delightful thought! Last, though not least, I am by the sea, the restless, restless sea, whose waves are thundering dirges in my ears even as I write.

And this reminds me, Teddy darling, that on the beach, where this same old, rolling ocean dashes its surf and foam, your poor Pollie came near losing her situation as Miss Pennyfeather's young companion, through the agency of the always detestable little pug. We had been walking on the beach—Miss Pennyfeather, Fido and Pollie—you will notice that I am particular to mention names in accordance with the social status of the parties spoken of—when Mr. Fido—I also give him the title he enjoys in the fine society of which he is a distinguished ornament—insisted upon strolling in the direction of the tents occupied by a travelling showman. At first Miss Pennyfeather held him well in hand by means of the long gold chain attached to his golden collar which he always wears when out walking.

But in an unguarded moment the chain slipped from her fingers, and the refined and gentlemanly Fido, with a howl of delight—a howl that might have seemed natural in a baser bred and commoner creature—at once made a dash for the door of the circus tent, where it was more than possible the tenderly-reared pug might find and mingle with dogs of a less high and fashionable degree.

This distressing possibility occurred to the mind of his mistress, and made her nearly frantic. It was a circumstance not to be tolerated for an instant.

“Run, Pollie,” screamed Miss Pennyfeather at the top of her voice.

I was standing at her very elbow. But she is deaf as a post, and, like all people afflicted with deafness, she invariably screams her commands to me in a tone loud enough to waken the celebrated Seven

“Run, Pollie. How dare you let poor, dear, darling Fido get into such low company as he will find inside a circus tent? Miss Wardlaw, how dare you?”

And Miss Pennyfeather pranced over the sand in great indignation, shaking her lace parasol and attract-

ing the attention of everybody to poor me—which was quite unnecessary, I must say. There was nothing else for it but that I must go inside the tent for that naughty dog—Miss Pennyfeather does not permit me to call Fido a “dog” in her presence—so I went inside. And sure enough, in the front row of seats, looking as big as you please—and acting as if he was of the first importance, sat Fido upon his haunches—loudly barking his approval at the various performers as they whirled about the ring in front of him.

As I rushed into the entrance, up popped a little lit of a red-haired creature, who stepped before me and says politely, but firmly :

“Your ticket, Miss—you can’t see this ’ere performance without a ticket. Jeakles deadheads nobody—not even pretty girls like you.”

Very few people were inside the tent. I could see Fido plainly, and there I was, without a penny in my pocket, and Mr. Jeakles standing right before me, determined not to allow me to pass.

“It is the dog, sir,” cried I. “Fido ran away and came in here without his mistress’ consent, and I only want him.”

“Sensible dawg,” says Mr. Jeakles.

“He would come, and we couldn’t help ourselves. If you will let me have him I’ll go away.”

“A sensible dawg, that,” says Mr. Jeakles again, looking over at Fido and winking his eye, “a werry sensible dawg, I must say. But he has had the sense to pick out a *preserved* seat in the front row, and somebody must pay for it. It’s half-a-dollar, Miss. Jeakles don’t allow no deadheads, not even dawgs.”

“Oh, dear me,” says I, “it is all a mistake, Mr. Jeakles; please *do* give me the dog.”

“Naw,” says Mr. Jeakles, wagging his red head, “not I. Jeakles deadheads nobody nor nawthin. Business is business, Miss, and business with ‘yours truly’ has been too poor here at Old Point Comfort for me to let you have that dawg without paying for him. When a dawg knows enough to go into a cirkis and pick him out a *preserved* seat, Miss, he’s got to pay for it. No deadheads ‘lowed round Henery Jeakles.”

It was impossible to pay for the seat, and equally impossible to get the dog. I had not a penny, and I

dared not leave the tent without Fido. I was nearly distracted, for everybody was looking at me, and just then Miss Pennyfeather began to call my name loudly from the outside. Besides, Mr. Jeakles kept coming a little closer to me every moment, and staring in a way that made me feel very uncomfortable.

“Would you mind telling me your name, young lady,” says he, coming a little nearer, and peering up into my face.

“I am Miss Wardlaw,” says I; “do, do, please, give me Fido. I’ll send you the money for the seat.”

“If I didn’t know it,” says he, as if he were thinking his thoughts aloud, “if I hadn’t seen her little green and grass-grown grave with these two eyes of mine”—he came a little closer still, peering into my face—“if I hadn’t seen them golden ringlets a-trailin’ down over a muslin shroud, and them eyes, so blue and smilin’, hidden under the dirt and grass and gravel of a country churchyard; if I hadn’t—Sairy Ann, come here,” calling suddenly to a bedizened woman who was trying to walk a rope at the other end of the tent, “and tell me who this young lady looks like.”

Mr. Jeakles slunk back, still staring

at your poor, unhappy Pollie, as his wife came forward. She turned quite white for just a moment. Then she tossed her head.

“Pah! Don’t be a fool, Henery,” says she, curtly. “She looks like enough, but it can’t be her. Lydia’s child has been dust and ashes this many a year, so come along with me about your business. Give her the dratted dawg and let her go. The performances must not be interrupted in this kind of way.”

Mr. Jeakles fetched Fido and put him in my arms without a word. Miss Pennyfeather was calling now louder than ever, and I hurried to the place of exit. Mr. Jeakles followed me quite to the door, all the time looking intently in my face, and muttering his thoughts aloud. “Good-bye, Miss,” said he, as I sped out of the doorway. “Good-bye, young lady. I’m glad I’ve seen you, though the sight of you has made my heart ache. You make me think of a dear lost child who’s been in heaven these many years, over whose grave the English daisies are growing now.” I looked up into his queer, homely face, and, Teddy dear, it seemed as if, somewhere or some time, I had seen that face before.

Then I said : "Good-bye, sir ;" and Miss Pennyfeather called again.

"All she lacks to be Lydia's child," said Mr. Jeakles, as if talking to himself, as I went away, "all she lacks is the little chain and the golden filbert."

I was so startled when he said that—for how should Mr. Jeakles know anything about a chain and a filbert ornament—that I trembled like a leaf, and would have asked him some questions then and there, but that Miss Pennyfeather immediately pounced upon me, and, seizing her darling dog, began scolding me for my carelessness at the very top of her voice ; and, as it is a pretty big, strong voice, I was soon the "observed of all observers" among the people who lined the beach.

I barely escaped my discharge then and there ; but, by solemnly protesting that it shall never happen again, I am to continue on for a time longer.

Write me a long letter, Teddy, and be sure to tell me how you get on with your ever dear, kind papa, and the ever odious Mr. Bolton,

and believe me, Teddy darling, ever your own POLLIE.

[TELEGRAM I.]

From T. Bellew, Jr., to Miss Pollie Wardlaw at Villa Hampton, Va.

October 20, 18—

MY DEAREST ONE,—Your letter contains information of vital importance. Mr. Wopping entreats you to lose no time in interviewing Mr. Jeakles on the subject of the chain and ornament. By all means detain the showman until after the arrival of the 10.30 train to-morrow. We will be with you then—our first opportunity.—Ever yours,

T. BELLEW, JR.

[TELEGRAM II.]

From Miss Wardlaw to Mr. Wopping.

Old Point Comfort, VA.,

October 20, 18—.

MR. WOPPING, dear Sir,—Your dispatch was received too late to be of service. The showman had been gone two days when my letter was mailed to Mr. Bellew. "'Twas ever thus from childhood's hour," etc.

Faithfully yours,

POLLIE WARDLAW.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING MR. JEAKLES.

MR. JEAKLES' business not having received the liberal patronage during his sojourn at Old Point Comfort which he felt that business deserved, the worthy showman had made some haste to "fold up his tents like the Arabs" and shake the dust of the beach from his heels.

This action, however, had not been done without some slight feelings of anger and just indignation on the part of Mr. Jeakles. It was not in the nature of the jolly showman to accept such neglect as he had received at Old Point Comfort with anything like complaisance or cheerfulness of spirit, and as his travelling waggon had resumed its endless march in the gray dawn of the early morning for fresher fields and greener pastures, he had partially avenged the slight put upon his occupation by turning himself about, and shaking his withered fists alternately at the shelving sands, the roaring sea, and at the cottages wherein thousands of careless people now slumbered by the breezy shore.

"What folks expect nowadays in the show business is beyond my comprehension," grumbled Mr. Jeakles discontentedly. "The variety wots required now, by a fault-findin', parsymonus public, would bust up a richer man than me to provide it for 'em."

"You had your opportunity once, Henery, to make your forchin', but you let it slip; your a-getten' paid for not doing as you orter have done," said Mrs. Jeakles, putting her frizzled head out from under the waggon cover, where she had been trying to take "cat-naps," and speaking in an I-told-you-so and it's good-enough-for-you sort of tone, which she had discovered from long use never failed to highly exasperate the worthy showman.

"What more they could want," continued Mr. Jeakles, in an injured manner, and paying not the slightest heed whatever to the fuzzy blonde head that was sticking out towards him from the upturned flap—"what more they could ask for, when there's Sairy Ann to walk the tite-rope, and turn summer salts on the flyin' trapeze, and me to sing my sellybrated fewgew's on the banjo, not to mention the seven eddicated, wallyble mules in the walk around

—it's weally too distressin' to think about."

"I had warnin's, Henery. You can't deny that," cried Mrs. Jeakles.

"And so're I," said Mr. Jeakles, crossly, as a big drop of water plashed down into his upturned face. "And here's one of 'em, Sairy Ann, this here drop of water. I've a powerful strong warnin' now that you'll get wet soon if you don't keep that 'ere waggin cover down and put your head in a little."

Mrs. Jeakles prudently retired the fuzzy blonde head, until only the tip of a sharp nose was visible in the aperture.

Mr. Jeakles had vowed to journey inland and visit only small places where people were not fashionable, hoping for a more liberal patronage.

As he journeyed along now, with his one weather-eye fixed alternately upon the dusty road before him and the big black clouds which were piling themselves up above him, he wondered if by any chance it would "up and rain" just at the most inopportune moment, an event which seemed likely enough from the present indications.

Another big drop came down upon the dusty face of Mr. Jeakles, followed by others in rapid succes-

sion. He touched his beloved mules lightly with the whip, and descriyng a village in the distance, hurried to its friendly shelter. The storm still hung threateningly in the heavens as Mr. Jeakles reached the desired haven, and hurriedly pitched his tents, making himself in readiness for business.

Flaming show-bills soon told the wondering villagers that "Jeakles' Great Show," the very "Greatest Show on Earth," was now in their midst, and claimed a share of their patronage and attention.

The wind had been blowing up strong and cool all day, and with night it changed to almost a hurricane. Mr. Jeakles lifted a flap of the canvas tent and peered anxiously out. It was getting to be intensely dark, and the wind soon increased to a fury which threatened to bring the frail cloth structure down about their heads.

"Here's a go!" remarked the showman, with some asperity; "blessed if it isn't. Here we have been a-playin' to bad business for the last month, and I don't see from present indications that we are to have any let-up to it to-night. What a beastly wind! blamed if I don't begin to think there is a Joner among us."

"A Joner," repeated his wife's voice at his elbow; "a Joner, did you say, Mr. Jeakles? And have I n't said so for the last—nobody knows how long? But you never listen to a word I say—not you. I don't believe you're a-listenin' now."

"Oh, yes, I am. I hear you, and I hear the wind too. Your voice is only 'wind' of another sort, and I'm used to it—if I may say so."

"There you go, Henery; allus a makin' light of me; allus careless. What with the counterfeit money we had passed on us in Chicago, and the bad business we have played to ever since, we'll be porpers yet. And it might have been different. You can't deny but what I've had my warnin's and my four-runners, Henery."

"Dang your four-runners, Sairy Ann," retorted Mr. Jeakles, crossly; "dang your four-runners! They're just as likely to mean the wrong thing as the right one, and likelier too. I would not give the wag of my finger for all the dreams and signs and warnin's and four-runners that you have had during the last five-and-forty years, ma'am. Do you hear that?"

"Certainly, I hear it; I ain't

deaf," assented Mrs. Jeakles, warming with the subject; "and that's it. I tell you now, as I've told you a hundred times before, that you are the Joner in the family. And you have been, for the last eighteen years—ever since you missed a forchin' by not doin' your duty."

"No insinowations, ma'am," said Jeakles, "no insinowations."

"Who's insinowatin'?" ejaculated Mrs. Jeakles, scornfully; "not I."

At that instant a furious blast swept up the street, and came roaring over the little square.

The tent trembled like a leaf in the wind.

Mrs. Jeakles dropped to the ground in sudden terror.

"We'll be blowed up!" screamed she. "If I live to see daylight again, I'll certainly go and do some-thin'—somethin' desprit."

"Don't be a fool!" said the showman, encouragingly; "don't be a fool! Be a leetle careful what you do—a leetle careful, ma'am. You don't know much, ma'am, but what you do is a damage to you. A leetle knowledge, Mrs. Jeakles, is a dangerous thing—don't forget it."

Then came another blast, followed by a sudden uplifting of the tent, which hovered for a brief in-

stant in the air. Then the canvas, poles, and all went whirling on the wings of the tempest, and the rain poured down in sheets. Mr. Jeakles found himself presently, when he had been landed by the fury of the storm hard by a stone wall, hatless, coatless, and drenched to the skin. It was a little while ere he could realize the extent of the misfortune that had overtaken him. There was a deep cut on his forehead, and his left arm hung limp and helpless by his side.

“Blast my jolly eyes,” muttered the showman, as he staggered to an upright position; “blast my jolly eyes, if this ain’t another one of them gentle zephyrs the whole blamed continent is sellibrated for! I’ve been blowed up twice now, and I’m alive yet; but where’s my box of wittles and my tent? likewise my mules and Mrs. Jeakles, that dear pardner of my——”

“Dear Lud,” groaned a voice on the other side of the stone wall; “dear Lud, if I’m ever forgiven for not goin’ accordin’ to the signs and warnin’s I’ll do better—’deed I will.”

“Talk of angels,” muttered Jeakles. “I say, Sairy Ann!”

“Henery,” cried a joyful voice. “Do I hear my Henery once more?”

“Don’t be a fool, Sairy Ann!”

said Mr. Jeakles, encouragingly; “but if you’re alive and sound, climb over this danged wall and help me to find our way back to a brighter and a drier world.”

Fortunately the storm had been of short duration, and no damage had been done by the wind, except what Mr. Jeakles had suffered in the loss and destruction of his tent, and such other portable valuables as he might have had with him at the time. But Mr. Jeakles was a much discouraged man. As they made their way through the darkness to where the light of a street lamp shone in the distance, he made a new resolution.

“I’ll tell you what it is, Sairy Ann,” said he, as they descried the village inn, “I’m done with the show business. I’m going to abandon it for ever.”

“But you can’t. What will we do to make our living by?” returned Mrs. Jeakles, anxiously.

“Do!” snorted the showman. “Why, I’ll order some bills to-morrow, and advertise ourselves as the Intelligent Couple, and we’ll go lecturing; blast me if I don’t! There’ll be no danger then, in case of a wind-storm, that our property will be blowed away.”

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. JEAKLES INDULGES IN SARCASM.

MR. JEAKLES stepped into the office of the little hotel. He presented anything but a favourable appearance as he stood there, dripping with water, his face bloody and haggard, and with a dogged expression upon it that made him seem all the more unprepossessing still.

"Landlord," said he, "I want a room for my wife and I, and a surgeon to set my broken arm. Your little winds," with infinite sarcasm, "are a trifle too much for Mr. Jeakles."

"You shall be served, sir," said the landlord, bustling forward. "Is it possible you were in the storm, sir?"

"Possible!" ejaculated Mr. Jeakles, drawing his stumpy figure up to its tallest height and glaring up into the face of the interlocutor, his bosom bursting with rage. "You ask me if it's possible!" he cried with withering sarcasm. "Why, man, here's the evidence," striking his breast violently with his right hand. "I'm the evidence as will prove to anybody that it's not only possible but the fact, sir."

"Really, no offence, Mr. Jeakles," said the host, in a conciliatory tone.

"I hope you suffer no serious loss, save the injury done to your arm."

"Not any seris loss, thankee," retorted the angry showman, sarcastically; "not any werry seris loss. Oh, no! Nothing but my tent, and my luggage, and a box of good wittles, and Mrs. Jeakles' Sunday band-box, with her best bunnit in it. Not to mention my covered waggin and seven mules—seven eddicated, wallyble mules. But this is no seris loss—no seris inconvenience to me, sir, at the present time. Oh dear no!"

"Dear me, dear me," said the landlord, "is it that bad, then?"

"When I think of them mules," went on Mr. Jeakles, his heart swelling with passionate rage at the recollection of his numerous misfortunes, "them seven eddicated, wallyble mules, wot allus woke me up in the mornin's and lulled me to rest in the evenin's with the sound of their interestin' and melojus voices—when I realize them seven wallyble mules are gone for ever—then I realize that Jeakles' business is bust up and he is a porper on the country. That, sir, is the size of my misforchin."

Mrs. Jeakles, who had been tugging at her husband's coat sleeve for several seconds without eliciting any attention from that gentleman, now gave a vigorous pull that turned the little showman completely about on his pins and brought him face to face with his better half.

“Don’t call yourself a porper yet,” cried Mrs. Jeakles, eagerly ; “don’t call yourself a porper, Mr. Jeakles, for it will be your own fault now if you don’t take advantage of your knowledge and rake in a forchin at least. Look there on the wall, Henery, I tell you the finger of Providence is a-p’intin’ the way.”

As it was a fact that Mrs. Jeakles now stood pointing her own finger at a placard on the wall, whether she meant by this to delicately insinuate that she had acted as a special providence to the showman, and that hers was the providential digit alluded to, is not known ; but her present attitude, when taken in conjunction with the feeling of great respect with which the worthy woman was known to entertain for her own merits and opinions, would seem to argue in the affirmative. For a moment Mr. Jeakles was

dazed. Could he believe his eyes ? Evidently he could, for there the announcement was, in big black letters, staring down at him from the wall. Mr. Jeakles rubbed something that looked like a mist from his eyes, and slowly spelled over the words again. But there was no mistake. It read plainly :

“TWENTY THOUSAND DOL-
LARS REWARD !

“To any person, male or female, who can bring us information that will lead to the discovery of the present whereabouts of

“CATHERINE ROKEWOOD AND HER
CHILD.

“We will pay the above-mentioned
reward. Address

“WIVERLY & WOPPING,
“Attorneys and Counsellors at
Law.”

“Once you refused to claim that reward, Mr. Jeakles, but you shan’t now,” said the showman’s wife, firmly. “I’ve got too good, sound legs of my own this time, Henery, and if you don’t do you duty now, Sairy Ann knows hers, and she won’t be afraid to do it.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARLEY SEES A GHOST.

IT was the evening of a cool October day. The sun had gone down and the wind was blowing up fresh and crispy from the distant mountains, laden with the spicy, aromatic odours of the pines which clothed their sides. The peculiar haze of autumn-time hung like a smoky veil over a landscape broken here and there by the circuitous roads which wound like dusty ribbons over its undulating surface. Mr. Wopping was riding leisurely along in his open carriage, enjoying the cool and bracing air and the easy motion of his slow-going vehicle. Absorbed in the contemplation of the scenery about him — although it was the same familiar landscape he had known for many years — and engrossed in the pleasurable emotions it called to his mind, the counsellor had gradually allowed the reins by which he guided his faithful beast to slacken in his hands, and they now hung over the dashboard, swinging loosely to and fro. Dobbin himself paused now and then in his easy-going pace to snatch a

bit of the wild grasses which still flourished luxuriantly on either side of the way. Mr. Wopping was going in the direction of Rokewood. He was wanting to see Captain Turtle just now, and the Captain was only to be found at Rokewood. For some reason only known to himself the detective had suddenly determined to exchange the somewhat irksome boundary of his sky-parlour in the old brick lodging-house for the more elegant and commodious apartments which had been fitted up for his use in the gloomy house at Rokewood. To Mr. Wiverly and Mr. Wopping this change had been very sudden and very unexpected.

Captain T. evidently had his reasons, but he was very reticent, and declined to explain them.

Mr. Wopping had ridden slowly along until, turning a bend in the road, the chimneys of Rokewood appeared in the distance.

The twilight was now settling down on the lovely valley, and he gathered up his lines, chirruping to his horse, to urge him into a faster gait.

Rokewood Chapel was distant from the manor house something less than half a mile, and now lay

between the counsellor and Rokewood. The winding road wound down to the estate in such a manner that Mr. Wopping's slow-going carriage had now approached almost opposite to the chapel, in whose vaults rested the bones of all the dead-and-gone Rokewoods for generations back.

He was musing on the mutability of human life as he glanced at the dark and sombre vaults which held them now, when he was startled by a piercing cry, which seemed to proceed from the chapel itself. An instant later, and Marley came flying down the stone steps that led to the road.

Evidently the poor old servant was wild with terror. Instead of advancing in a direct line to where the attorney's carriage had come to a sudden halt in the road, he ran round and round, describing a correct circle on the thick sward.

Mr. Wopping sprang from the vehicle and rushed to his assistance.

"What under heaven is the matter?" he asked, hurriedly. "What ails you, Marley?"

"A ghost! a ghost!" screamed the old man, still circling wildly about the little plat of green sward. "A ghost! Oh, I'm haunted! I

always feared it. I always said it. And now it's come. What shall I do?"

"Hush!" said Mr. Wopping, sternly, taking the frightened creature firmly by the shoulder. "Control yourself, Marley. An old man like you ought to know better than to give way to childish fear and superstition. Be quiet, and tell me what you have seen."

Marley's teeth chattered, and his face was white with terror. He sank down upon the ground, and, clasping his knees with his shaking arms, rocked his body to and fro.

"For twenty years," he cried, paying no attention to the attorney, and apparently unheeding his presence, "for twenty years I have kept my master's secret. But, oh! I knew it was wrong, all wrong; and now I'm getting paid for it. That awful face, that awful voice! Can I ever forget them?"

Mr. Wopping took Marley forcibly in his arms, and dragged the terror-stricken old creature to the carriage.

"Now, then, Marley," said Wopping, sternly, "climb into this vehicle, and, as we ride along, give me an explanation of your words and conduct. You have said both

too much and too little for me to allow you to stop now."

Marley glanced fearfully over his shoulder at the gloomy chapel.

"I saw her as plainly as I see you now, Mr. Wopping," cried Marley, hysterically. "Oh! that wan face—those sunken eyes; that awful voice! She's haunting me for what I've done, and she always will!"

Wopping shoved the old servant unceremoniously into the carriage.

"Who's haunting you?"

"Miss Catherine."

"Pah!" ejaculated Wopping, picking up the lines and moving off.

"Twice now I've seen her," persisted Marley, in spite of the evident discredit attached to his words by the lawyer. "The first time was the night my poor master died at Rokewood, and the second time was to-day in the chapel vaults."

"You are crazy!" said Wopping.

"No, I ain't," wept Marley; "but I soon will be if I'm to be haunted in this way."

"The dead do not return," said Wopping, with some severity, "and we believe Catherine to have been dead these long years. If she were living, we must long since have found her or some trace of her."

Rest easy, Marley; you have seen no ghost. It is but the effect of an idle imagination running riot."

"I suppose so, sir," said Marley, humbly; "but I hope to die if I didn't see Miss Catherine's face in the Rokewood vaults this evening. I did, indeed!"

"Still you persist in harping on that one string, Marley. Don't you know that nobody cf sense believes in such things as ghosts nowadays?"

"Yes, sir; but I ain't one of the smart ones. The fine-spun theories of the smart ones ain't for the use of people like me, sir."

"So it seems," said Wopping, dryly, touching his whip to the horse.

"Now, then, Marley," he continued, as they rode along, "I want you to tell me what you meant by saying you had kept your master's secret for twenty years. If that secret concerned your wretched young mistress in any way the time has come now when it must and shall be divulged."

The servant crouched down closer into the corner of the carriage seat. He trembled violently, and cast a half-fearful glance over his shoulder in the direction of the now distant chapel.

"On my bended knees I took an oath on the old Bible that I would keep that secret for ever," whispered the servant, crouching still closer in his seat, "and I have kept it."

"See here!" Wopping laid his hand firmly on the trembling creature at his side. "If that secret is what I more than suspect it to be—a knowledge of Catherine Rokewood's innocence of the murder of her husband, there is no punishment which could be visited upon you that would ever atone for the immeasurable wrong you have done her. Marley, you must tell me what you know about that matter, or I will cause proceedings to be brought against you that will force you to do so."

CHAPTER XIX.

RETROSPECTIVE.

LIKE most people of his class Marley entertained a wholesome fear of the law. Perhaps if he had enjoyed a closer acquaintance with the various ramifications of that vast and peculiar institution, whose mechanism found an able and respectable expounder in the person of Mr. Wopping, his fears might have

abated and have receded in exact ratio with the progression of the acquaintance. For, as with other things to which the axiom is applied, and than which nothing is truer, it may be said even of the law that familiarity breeds contempt and a close acquaintance with it ends in disgust.

Mr. Wopping's threat was not lost upon the timid old creature at his side, though he still struggled, evidently with conscientious scruples, against breaking the vow given to his dead master.

"I said, solemn and true, that I never would tell until I had his permission," mumbled Marley, as he huddled down in the carriage.

"You must!" returned Wopping, sternly.

"What good could it do now, after all these years have gone?" cried Marley, petulantly.

"I shall give you no reasons. I simply advise you to make a clean breast of the matter at once. I wish to heaven I had suspected your secret at the time of the trial. You would not then have kept it hidden as you have done."

"I swore on my knees never to tell it," wept the servant, wringing his hands.

"The law can make you speak," said Wopping, coldly. "Perhaps if you were to try the confinement of a prison cell for a while it might help to show you the enormity of your offence."

"Not the law, not a prison!" screamed Marley. "Oh, no; not that. I am afraid of the law."

"You know the alternative."

"I always told him it was wrong," cried the servant, falling in a heap in the bottom of the carriage, and clasping Wopping frantically around the legs. "I always told him so; and I never wanted to do it; never. But I had seen it all; and Mr. Rokewood discovered me that awful day of the murder under the buffet where I had hidden when the quarrel begun, and he made me swear not to speak of it until he gave me permission."

"Begin at the beginning, Marley," ordered Wopping.

"I am," cried the distracted old man, "I am. It was the day that young Master Jerome came home with his bride. They had first gone to Major Deane's, and Miss Catherine's face was red with weeping when she walked into the dining-room at Rokewood. Dinner was over, and old master was sitting

over the walnuts, when in walks his son and Catherine. We were not expecting Jerome just then, and old master was much surprised to see him coming in with a lady on his arm.

"'Marley,' says old master, turning to me—I had been busy cleaning his pistols, and was just done—'Marley, bring seats for my son and this lady, and then see about some refreshments.' You see, he had never seen Miss Deane, and did not know her, and at that time her veil was down, and he had not yet seen the strange lady's face.

"At that instant Jerome stepped nearer his father, and taking the lady's hand, says :

"'Father, this is my wife; we were married a week ago at Newport.'

"'Your wife?' says his father.

"'Yes, my wife, Major Deane's daughter.'

"Rokewood staggered as if he had been struck.

"'Not Major Deane of The Willows?' says he, getting white as a dead man, and a peculiar light a-flashing up into his eyes; 'surely not the daughter of that Major Deane?'

"'Yes, father,' says Jerome,

firmly, removing the veil that covered his wife's face; 'yes, father; this is Catherine, the daughter of that Major Deane, and my wife.'

"Her eyes were all red and swollen with weeping, and her lips quivered now, as she held out her hand to Rokewood.

"'And she has been cursed by her father, and disinherited for marrying me,' says Jerome, 'and we now come to you.'

"Old master never so much as noticed the hand the poor thing was reaching to him. The curiosest smile began to curl around the corners of his mouth, and it seemed as if a thousand devils lurked in the glances that shot from his eyes.

"I was afraid—I could not tell why. He had forgotten to tell me to leave the room, and I was too well-trained to go without first having an order to do so. The pistols I had been to work on now lay loaded and shining on the sideboard where I had put them when he ordered me to bring seats for his son and the lady. Master's eyes seemed to turn to them with a look that fairly froze the blood in my veins.

"'Father,' says Jerome, 'you will

forgive me for my sudden marriage —will you not? I was so certain of your love and your kindness that I overruled Catherine's objections, and insisted on having the ceremony gone through with at once. It is a regular and valid marriage, and Steff and Warner' [two of his English friends] 'went to church with us as witnesses. I have brought you a daughter, father, a new mistress for Rokewood. Are you not glad?'

"Catherine grew paler and paler as she looked into the terrible face of Mr. Rokewood. She turned suddenly, and threw herself into her husband's arms. 'Let me go, Jerome!' cried she. 'I cannot bear it. What have I done that your father should murder me with such terrible looks?'

"'What have you done?' says Rokewood, speaking to her for the first time. 'What have you done? Adventuress! thief!' pointing his finger at her. 'You have stolen my son! fit spawn of a detested and detestable race! you have come like a thief in the night into the sanctuary of a home whose very air your presence pollutes!'

"'Father! father!' cries Jerome, 'remember you are talking to my

wife!—a Rokewood of Rokewood now!'

" 'Never,' says his father, 'never! Vile reptile that she is, Rokewood shall never accept her as its mistress. The divorce courts will soon free you from this mesalliance, Jerome.'

" Catherine shrieked.

" 'Have I angered my father and estranged my friends for this?' screamed she, rushing wildly towards the door. 'Is it to suffer the shame and disgrace of a divorce court that I have sacrificed my home and my people? I will not suffer it. I have not deserved the ignominy you put upon me.'

" I had dropped down in the corner near the buffet, and she did not notice me. The pistols caught her attention. Rokewood advanced down the apartment as his wretched daughter-in-law sought to make her escape from it.

" 'A serpent! A she devil!' he hissed, still pointing his shaking finger at her. 'The daughter of a race of scoundrels! Do you suppose for a moment that you will be allowed to enter the gates of Rokewood as its honoured mistress? Never. Go, and go alone. Jerome will soon forget you, once freed

from the hateful tie that binds him to you now.'

" 'Father, you are mistaken,' cried Jerome, taking hold of Catherine's hand; 'in sickness or health, for richer or poorer, for better or worse, Catherine is mine, and I defy you to separate us.'

" Old master had stopped near the buffet, with his hand resting on it, pretty close to the pistols. He took one in his fingers, sort of slowly like, but retaining it in his grasp, and putting his hand behind his back.

" Jerome's unexpected defiance seemed to turn him cold all over; he shook, and leaned against the buffet. By this time I had crawled pretty well under it. I didn't like the way old master was a doing with the pistol he was hiding behind him, and I didn't like the way Miss Catherine had of glancing towards the one that still lay there in plain sight on the buffet. I didn't know what to do. They all looked as if they meant murder, and I wished in the bottom of my heart that the pistols had been upstairs in their holsters in master's bed-chamber.

" 'He leaves me—his father, groaned Rokewood, as Jerome

ceased speaking, 'who has cherished him all his life. He leaves me for a good-for-nothing, shameless creature whom he had not heard of a month ago. Jerome, you are mad.'

"Catherine turned suddenly, and darted to the buffet. She seized the pistol, and whirled about, facing her husband, with her back to old master. I was so close to Mr. Rokewood that I could see his fingers tremble as they clutched the weapon.

"'Jerome,' says Miss Catherine, 'farewell. I will not be the cause of your alienation from your father.'

"As she was speaking Mr. Rokewood had raised his pistol and taken deliberate aim at her, but she was unconscious of his act, for her back was towards him.

"'What would you do, Catherine?' cries Jerome, rushing to his wife's side. 'Put down that pistol.'

"She was pointing it squarely at her own breast, when Jerome snatched it from her. Simultaneously there was a report, and young Rokewood fell dead at her feet. As his son dropped to the floor Rokewood threw down his smoking pistol, and it landed so close to me that I could have touched it.

"'Good God,' says Rokewood, 'what have I done?'

"Catherine screamed and fainted as her husband fell. His blood spattered her hands, and ran down in a pool on the carpet.

"Not knowing what mischief might be done with the weapons I reached out and picked them up. It was then I saw that the pistol Catherine had held was not discharged at all. Rokewood, in his insane fury, had accidentally killed his own child.

"As Jerome fell, pierced by his father's shot, Rokewood saw me hiding beneath the buffet. Catherine had fainted, and Rokewood dragged me out from my place of concealment.

"'I have killed my own child,' said he, in a husky whisper, 'and you, Marley, are the only witness who can testify to what I have done. Down upon your knees, man, and swear that you will keep the secret!'

"I had no idea of the dreadful vengeance he was preparing to pour out on the poor young wife. I only supposed he meant to shield his name from the odium which would naturally be showered upon it should the story become known

that he had killed his own son. I knelt down and took the oath he dictated. Then he says, 'Marley, come with me,' and I went with him to his suite of rooms on the second floor.

"I did not think of such a thing as resistance. As man and boy I had lived under his rule, and been subject to his authority all my life, and I dared not disobey his commands.

"Opening off his bath-room was a large, square closet, with two windows in it, that we used to store linen and such things in. He ordered me to remove all the articles from the room. I did so. Then he told me to take down a cot bed that he used to lie on sometimes, and put it in the closet. I did that too. When it was fixed to his liking he told me to go into the closet and close the door, and see what the effect would be. I had no sooner closed the door than I heard the key turn in the lock, and he went away. I was a prisoner. Mr. Rokewood came back after a while, bringing some food and wine. He told me to keep quiet, that he would release me after a while.

"I was greatly worried, and knew

not what to do. There the dead body of my poor young master was lying on the floor in the dining-room, and the wretched widow in a swoon beside it, and I locked up in that far-away closet, unable to do anything at all. From my windows I saw Miss Catherine put into the Rokewood carriage and driven away. I wondered where she was going, for Mr. Rokewood himself sat on the box. I found out long afterwards that he had driven her to the Wansmore Prison, delivering her up himself to the care of the officers on the charge of murder.

"A few days later I saw the hearse and funeral carriages wending their way to the chapel with the body of Jerome. Six horrible months I stayed in that closet, and I was only liberated then in consequence of a sickness which came upon me. When I recovered sufficiently to go about again I gradually discovered what my master had done. I was overcome with horror at his crime, and begged him on my knees to undo what he had done. But he refused, and dared me to break my oath of secrecy."

"Marley," said Mr. Wopping, "I shall take you up to the Gover

nor's office. You must tell that story to him. There must be a pardon got for that wronged woman. Dead or alive, the odium that rests upon her name shall be removed ; dead or alive, her name shall be cleared."

"She must be dead," said Marley, shivering with fear. "Twice I've seen her ghost. The first time was a month ago, when Mr. Rokewood lay a corpse in the library. It must have been as late as two o'clock ; the body was in the library, which, you know, has long French windows opening on a terrace. I went in to wet the face of the corpse, and there at the head of the coffin, looking down at the dead face, stood Miss Catherine. I screamed—I couldn't help it. But the figure disappeared in the shadow of the heavy velvet curtains that hung before the windows. I searched the apartment a little later—soon as I could recover myself, at least—but there was no sign of her then.

"This afternoon I had occasion to go down into the vaults at the chapel—once a week, you know, it has always been the custom to take flowers down and strew on the coffins there—and as I was putting

a wreath on Jerome's a white face peered out of a shadowy corner. 'Marley ! Marley !' it said, and I recognized her again. It frightened me so that I was beside myself with fear when you drove along. I'm certain it was Miss Catherine's ghost."

The carriage was now rolling up the long pine avenue.

"Perhaps it was Miss Catherine herself," said Wopping, as they at last halted before the doors of Rokewood. "I hope so, for justice shall be done her at last."

They went into the house, and Wopping inquired immediately for Captain Turtle. Unfortunately that gentleman was not in. Mr. Wopping sat down, determined to wait for him. Time passed. The clock struck the hour of eleven, and still the detective came not. Mr. Wopping determined to wait no longer, but arose to take his departure.

"Perhaps he has gone to the lodgings," thought he. "I may find him at home waiting for me."

But the sound of his carriage wheels had hardly died away in the distance ere the figure of the detective was seen coming up the pine avenue. He was evidently footsore and weary, for he walked with an

effort, and very slowly, as though walking was painful to him. His clothing was torn and soiled, and bedraggled with the dews of the grasses, and dirty with the dust of the roads.

Weary though he was, there was a triumphant expression on his rugged features which was new to them, and told plainly that whatever his quest had been it had ended in unqualified success. He went directly to his own apartments, and, pulling off his coat, prepared for a bath. He presently emerged from the bath-room, and, bouncing into the billowy bed, pulled the blankets up snug over his shoulders.

“The man who gets ahead of me must be up early in the morning,” said he, airily. “I think I’ll walk down to Wopping’s office to-morrow and claim the twenty thousand dollars reward.”

CHAPTER XX.

IN EXTREMIS.

MR. WOPPING drove rapidly home and put out his horse before he went up to his office lodgings. Mr.

Wiverly had left town that day for a little journey in the country, and was not expected to return before the following morning. So there was no light in the office to welcome Mr. Wopping as he found his way into the dark passage that led up to his apartments, and the portly lawyer stumbled along and felt his way as best he could to the staircase.

Putting out his hand to grasp the newel post, and raising his foot at the same time to plant it firmly on the step, it came in contact with some heavy, sodden object that had fallen there.

With a feeling of horror Mr. Wopping recoiled from the clammy touch of the unknown object.

“What can it be?” he muttered, stooping down and putting out his hand. It came in contact with some straggling locks of hair, and a face that was wet and deathly cold.

A hasty ejaculation escaped the kind-hearted lawyer. He fumbled in his pockets for a match, found one presently, and striking it, peered at the limp creature who lay huddled there.

“It is Bane,” muttered Wopping. “Great heavens! what can have happened to him while I’ve been away?”

Mr. Wopping quite forgot his two hundred pounds avoirdupois in his excitement, and ran up the long flight of steps that led to his office door as lightly as if he had weighed less. Another moment and a stream of light flashed through the room and down the dingy passage, shining on the faintly-breathing heap at the foot of the stairs.

He quickly descended again, and lifted the wretched creature from his recumbent position. A feeble moan escaped his lips as the lawyer essayed to steady him upon his feet.

“Matthew, what has happened?” cried Wopping. “You are ill, you are dying, and here alone in this dark hall. For Heaven’s sake, Bane, what has happened to make you suddenly so much worse?”

Speechless, the Nobody’s head dropped forward upon his breast. Only a deep, long sigh was his reply to the attorney’s anxious questions. He leaned heavily against the sturdy figure of the lawyer, his breath coming fitfully and at what seemed long intervals. Much alarmed, Mr. Wopping seized him in his arms and bore him into the little office.

Then he saw, for the first time,

that a little stream of blood and foam was trickling from Bane’s lips and straying down over the shabby clothes.

He put the light figure upon the hard, little sofa, and mixed a glass of strong salt and water.

“Drink this,” he said; “it will help to stop that bleeding.”

Bane drank mechanically.

Wopping wiped the damp from his hands and the flecks of blood and foam from his clothing.

“Something dreadful must have happened to you,” said he, noticing the dust and grime that covered the poor garments. “Your clothing looks as if you had crawled in the dust and torn your way through the thicket. I find leaves and grass are tangled up in your hair, and your hat is lost entirely. Where have you been?”

“To my death,” gasped the Nobody.

“So I should say. You look like a dead man now, and you would have been a dead man in half an hour longer if I had not found you when I did.”

“You have ever been a kind friend to me, sir,” whispered the Nobody, humbly.

“I always mean to be, too.”

"Ay; kind friends are few in this world," said Bane, faintly.

"You are your own worst enemy," cried Wopping. "You take no care of yourself whatever; you live like a hermit, and refuse to consult a physician. I'll tell you what, Bane, I'm going down for a doctor myself. You must have—and shall have—medical attention. Gad! it is nothing more nor less than self-murder that you are trying to do in this neglect of your health. You behave exactly as if you wished to die and dared not resort to sharper measures in order to secure your object. I'll have a doctor here."

"Not to-night! Oh, no, not to-night, Mr. Wopping!" feebly entreated the wretched creature. "I am better now, far, far better. Do you not see it yourself?"

"I can see for myself, Matthew, that you are very obstinate and self-willed. You have had your way too long."

The Nobody groaned and turned his face to the wall.

The mute, despairing action touched Mr. Wopping to the heart.

"I don't mean to be cross with you, Matthew," said he, hastily, "but I would be *just*, since you will not deal justly with yourself."

"Mr. Wopping," said Bane, in a whispering voice, "I do not doubt your motives. Believe me when I tell you that there are reasons which make it impossible for me to consult a physician in regard to my health — obstacles not to be surmounted."

"You are mistaken. I know your reasons, Matthew."

"No, no," cried the Nobody, starting up in wild dismay, "you do not—you cannot."

"I tell you that I do know them. And they are foolish ones. It is only a feeling of false shame on your part—a feeling of false pride which prevents you from accepting the aid I have so often wished to give you. The reasons you speak of are monetary reasons. Don't deny it."

"If I could only die," muttered Bane, between his white lips, "but I can't. I am cursed with life."

Mr. Wopping lighted a fire in the grate, and sat down somewhat moodily before it.

He was worried and anxious over the strange perversity manifested by the Nobody. That the services of a competent physician were really needed by the forlorn creature Mr. Wopping could plainly see, but

Bane resented the idea so bitterly that, perplexed and baffled, the lawyer sat down to think it out for himself and decide upon the line of conduct best to pursue.

“If you will add one more to the many acts of kindness you have shown me,” said Bane, struggling to a sitting posture, “and help me to my room, I will be very glad. I cannot get there alone.”

“No,” said the old lawyer, calmly, “I won’t help you.”

“Mr. Wopping——”

“Because you shall not leave this office until you are decidedly better. If you go up into that sky-parlour by yourself who knows what might happen to you before morning? Here you are, and here you stay until daylight.”

Bane tried his best to stand upright, but he could not; he sank back on the lounge exhausted by the effort. “Mr. Wopping,” cried he, weakly, “if I must remain here will you not push the lounge closer up in the corner? I want to lie in the shadow of the book-case.”

Mr. Wopping rose hastily and pushed the lounge in the corner desired.

“You always seek the shadows, Matthew; why is it?”

“They are fit emblems of my life,” returned the Nobody, as the couch rolled back against the wall. “What are fitter companions to my shadowed life than the shadows that now enfold me, or the deeper, darker shadows of the grave to which I go?”

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. JEAKLES CLAIMS THE REWARD.

BRIGHT and early the ensuing morning the Chicago detective arose, and after a light breakfast took his departure for the attorney’s office. He arrived in town at an unusually early hour, and reached the brick lodgings, only to find the shutters still closed and no signs of life anywhere visible.

The truth was, Mr. Wopping had fallen asleep in his easy chair before the fire and had not yet aroused from it.

However, early as Captain Turtle had flattered himself that he would be upon the scene, he found a singular couple there in advance of him, who were evidently waiting,

with what patience they could muster, for the appearance of the attorney.

The Captain instantly recognized in the stumpy little dwarf an old acquaintance. "Hello, Jeakles," cried he, "where in the world did you drop from, and what are you doing here? Are you in trouble again and in search of law?"

Mr. Jeakles wagged his big, red head in the negative.

"I've had all the trouble I kin stand—me and Sairy Ann, here," replied the showman; "we're not a sufferin' for any more law, either, Captain. That danged villain wot got our money in Shekawgo, you know, up and bust jail, and cleared for parts unknown, in spite o' all we could to prewent him!"

"You don't say so!"

"Yes, I do say it! Wot's the use o' law when it can't keep fellers from bustin' jails as orter live in 'em allus?"

"That's a conundrum. Ask me something easier," said the detective.

"We ain't after no law," piped Mrs. Jeakles, plaintively; "we're after somethin' a good deal better nor that—somethin' richer and more attenin' to poor folks than law is."

The Captain laughed,

"I would like to know what that can be," cried the detective, sitting down on a bench hard by the office door. "What on earth, my good woman, is richer than law?"

"This is!" said Sairy Ann, whipping a crumpled hand-bill from her pocket and spreading it out on his knee, "this is, Mr. Turtle."

It was Captain Turtle's turn to feel surprised.

"Where did you get that hand-bill and what good will it do you?" asked he, quickly. "This advertisement offers a reward to the person or persons who can bring information of Catherine Rokewood. Surely, Mrs. Jeakles, you don't know anything of her, do you?"

"I don't, hey?" cried Sairy Ann, tossing her fuzzy head. "What's the reason I don't know anything of her? Tell me that, won't you, since you're so awful smart?"

"Why, good gracious!"

"I daresay you can 'good gracious' if you like, too; nobody's to hinder; but, when it comes to takin' in this here twenty thousand dollars reward, Sairy Ann Jeakles is the person that does it," cried the showman's wife, triumphantly.

"Would you mind telling me about it?" asked the Captain.

"Of course, we'd mind!" retorted Sairy Ann. "Keep a padlock on them ar lips o' yours, Mr. Jeakles; don't you go to givin' away this plum to ary detective, for a forchin is in it. Mum's the word, Henery."

There was a little bustle in the office at this juncture, and almost immediately Mr. Wopping opened the door.

"Why, bless my soul!" ejaculated he, starting back in astonishment as Mrs. Jeakles bounced past him into the office. "Who have we here, Captain?"

Before the detective could reply the showman thrust a card under the attorney's nose.

"Read that," said Mr. Jeakles, drawing himself proudly to his full height, which, alas! was still much less than the regulation stature. "Read that, sir, and you'll get the k'reck information."

Wopping glanced at the address. It read simply:

"The Intelligent Couple."

"I'm afraid that I don't understand any better than I did before," said Wopping.

"Je whiz!" ejaculated Mr. Jeakles. "Not understand that

card! Why, good Lord! it's plain as Sairy Ann's nose over there."

"It's allus Sairy Ann's nose, or Sairy Ann's hair," began Mrs. Jeakles, plaintively.

"Or Sairy Ann's voice," interrupted the showman. "Allus Sairy Ann's voice. You can bet your bottom dollar on Mrs. Jeakles' voice, gentlemen. It's all on account of that wonderful voice o' hers that yours truly has quit the show business and gone to lecturin'"

"What do you want here?" asked Wopping, with a puzzled expression, and feeling a strong inclination to laugh. "Perhaps you had better sit down and state your business."

"Pr'haps we had," said Mrs. Jeakles, plumping herself down on an office stool; "but the bizness won't take long."

"We've come to see about takin' in that twenty thousand dollars reward," observed the showman, calmly.

"What!"

"Didn't you offer twenty thousand dollars reward for news of that Catherine Rokewood?" cried Sairy Ann, bustling up, "and didn't you paint it in black and white? and air you a tryin' to get out of payin' it now?"

"That'd be my luck," said the little showman ; " just my blamed luck exactly."

"I did offer that sum, and offer it yet," said Wopping.

Captain Turtle sat down near the door ; he smiled quietly and glanced curiously at the shadowy corner, where a figure had drawn still closer to the wall as Mrs. Jeakles declared her intentions.

"Now, then, Mrs. Jeakles," said the detective, "go on with your information. I don't mind owning up to you that I've been trying for that reward myself ; but if you have a better and a prior claim to it I give you my word that I'll not have any hard feelings towards you if you should be the one to gather it in. Pitch in now and let me know where you stand on the subject."

"I ain't standin' on no subjick as I knows of. I'm a settin' on a hard, round, dratted stool, an' the stool is a standin' in the middle of the floor, about four feet six inches due west' ard," snapped Sairy Ann.

The Captain scratched his head. "Let an unappreciative world call you what it will, Mrs. Jeakles, you're a daisy," said he.

"What do you say this man's name is ?" asked Wopping, turning

quickly to the detective, and motioning towards the showman.

"Jeakles. He was once the proprietor of a show," replied the Captain.

Wopping could have hugged himself for joy. Here was a chance now to look after poor Pollie's pedigree.

"If Mrs. Jeakles is ready—why, I am in a mood to hear her," said Wopping.

"Not a blamed word, sir," cried Mrs. Jeakles. "Not a single blamed word, until we are told that it'll be paid. Bizness is bizness."

"Now, see here," said Wopping, impatiently, "I have offered a large sum of money for certain information ; and if you can give me a clue to the present whereabouts of Catherine Rokewood that money shall be paid to you, rest assured of it."

"The present whereabouts, did you say ?" cried the showman.

"Yes, that is what I said."

Mr. Jeakles' face lengthened very perceptibly.

"Sairy Ann," said he, turning to his wife, "we're left. This is just another piece of my blamed luck. Don't it beat the dickens ?"

Mrs. Jeakles began to cry.

"I allus told you, Henery, that you'd keep still too long."

"Never mind, Sairy Ann," said the showman, soothingly; "keepin' still too long ain't a fault o' yours, dear, and I'll try and bear the consequences like a man. Not that I'm very much of a man w'en it comes to weight—midgits wot begins to grow too late, an' stops a growin' too early, can't be expected to pull down the scales like the other sort. I'm only a betwixt and between, but my feelin's are full grown, and big for their size, and my intenshuns ain't to be doubted."

"Go on with your story," cried Wopping, "you shall be paid for your trouble."

"That has a werry encouragin' sound, I must say—werry."

"Did you know Catherine Rokewood?"

"I did—"

"More's the pity," interpolated Sairy Ann.

"Pr'aps I had better begin at the first of it," suggested Mr. Jeakles.

"By all means," said Wopping.

"Wich takes me back to '59, the year in wich I first came to this here blarsted American country. I wuz in the show bizness then, and I

came over just before the civil war—wich it warn't so werry civil either, w'en you consider the warious capers wot wuz cut w'ile it wuz a goin' on. At that time I wuz the proprietor and manager of Jeakles' Liliputian Hippodrome and Flyin' Trapeze Company."

"And you did a big business?"

"I must say that at first I did a smashin' big bizness. It was a new thing in this country in them times to see children a ridin' and a tumblin' and a turnin' of back-handed summersaults, and it took amazin' with the people. We traveled in wagins, and allus hired a woman to go 'long and help Mrs. Jeakles with the children—there was ten of 'em all told. In the summers we went North, and in the winters we showed through the South, and for a while we just made money hand over fist."

Mrs. Jeakles groaned.

"Air you colicky, Sairy Ann?" tenderly inquired the ex-showman.

She shook her head in the negative. "It's them recollekshuns," said she, putting her handkerchief to her eyes, "them recollekshuns of bygone times—times never to return."

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. JEAKLES' STORY.

"I CERTINLY thought it wuz the colic," remarked Mr. Jeakles, turning once more to the lawyer; "but, as it warn't, I'll proceed with the remnants of them happier times wich is so gallin' to my wife now."

Mr. Jeakles undoubtedly meant reminiscences, but his early education having been somewhat neglected he was rather given to using wrong words in wrong places; but, as he declared often enough, "his intentions were perfectly good, and could not be doubted."

"One night in the airy autumn of 1860," he continued, "we'd been a having a show at a little town in this werry State of Wirginny, and not so werry far from this here town I'm in now. And after the performance wuz over and the goods boxed on the wagins ready for a start, w'en w'at must Mrs. Jeakles here do but up and fall ill. I wuz at my wits' end to know wot to do with our little infant—we had one of our own then, dead now the poor dear—and the other ten liliputs, and Mrs. Jeakles not

able to lift her head. Our hired help had struck for more wages the day before and got discharged for her impertinence—so there wuz nobody to do a thing. I wuz feeling pretty sad over the turn of affairs, when along comes a tall, thin girl with a babe in her arms and stops by the wagin. She looked like she was clean beat out with walkin', and she asked me if she might sit by the camp-fire a bit and rest herself, wich I agreed to willingly enough. She sat so long that I finally went to her, and then I see for the first time that she wuz in a dead faint. I sprinkled some water on her face and she came to, and then she says: 'I'm a starvin' creetur. Give me bread for the love of heaven.' And I did.

"Pretty soon she sat up, and said she was feelin' better, and she offered me money for what I had given her, but I didn't take a penny, sir, not a penny."

Jeakles glanced proudly at his audience.

"That is just like Henery," said Mrs. Jeakles, suddenly lifting her face out from the folds of her pocket handkerchief. "Just like him; he'd give away the last bit of bread from his own table and not

stop to find out whether there was any money to buy more with for the next meal."

"Well, as she sat there a nussin' her babe she heard Mrs. Jeakles here a groanin', and going on that bad in the wagin that I thought surely every minute would be the last with her, and she says to me: 'Let one good turn serve another,' or something of that sort. And she put her own child on the grass, and she takes up my child and soothes it to sleep as easy as nothing at all, sirs.

"Then, sirs, she went to Mrs. Jeakles, and it seems like there must have been magic in her, for it wasn't but a little while afterwards that we were on our journey, and Mrs. Jeakles able to sit up.

"I felt like goin' on my knees to her, but she wouldn't hear a word about it, and she said that if we would only let her go with us that she would not be a mite of trouble to us, but would pay her own expenses, and take care of our infant and Mrs. Jeakles besides. Well, to make a long story short, it was a bargain, and nobody knows the comfort that gal wuz to us all that winter and the next spring. I noticed she wuz pritty still allus,

an' shyer nor a deer w'en we'd be a givin' performances. And when folks wuz round she'd allus have on her sunbunnit, and be a sittin' down quiet like in the covered travelin' wagin, or else in the dressin' tent where we fixed the children up for their parts.

"It might a been that there werry shyness o' hers wich first attracted Sairy Ann's 'tenshun to her and made her 'spishion things warn't all right with the stranger. Anyway the girl didn't seem to want to socityate with enybody; but she worked hard a patchin', or a cookin', or a sewin' for them ten little kids. We boarded ourselves and traveled mostly in country places, and we all got to thinkin' a sight o' the new girl and her child."

"You mean that you did," interrupted Mrs. Jeakles, with some asperity. "Speak for yourself, Henery. I allus said she wuz a fraud with them sly ways o' hers—and that ar white-livered face which looked more like a dead face than a living one. Sairy Ann, gentleman," said the showman's wife, turning towards Wopping and the detective, who were listening eagerly, "allus said she was nothin' but a deceivin' hussy, and a trampin' good-fei-

nothin', remember that. I watched her from the werry beginning, and I meant to. It warn't my fault that Mr. Jeakles didn't get the reward that was offered for her then."

"No," repeated Mr. Jeakles, "not your fault, Sairy Ann.

"Sairy Ann wuz death on Lidia, gentlemen. But as I was a sayin', the juveniles fairly worshipped the ground Lidia walked, and she was a mother to 'em. I don't know what we would ever have done without her that winter. It seemed as if some of the children were sick all the time, and when our own dear little baby breathed out its last breath on her lap I thought Mrs. Jeakles here would go up entirely.

"It went along till spring, when one day a constable comes a prowlin' 'round the tents—we were at a small town in one of the Middle States—and says he to me :

"'You ain't got no strange woman in your crowd, have you?'

"And I says, shortly enough, 'No, sir, not as I know of. All the women there is in this here concern are Mrs. Jeakles and the nurse.' Lidia—that is what she had told us to call her—wuz on the other side of the tent, sewing some spangles

on to a costume. She had her bonnet on, as usual, but when the constable began to tell what the woman was wanted for I knew Lidia heard what he said from the way she acted. I think if he'd a seen her at that minute he'd have suspected her, for she sort of shuddered all over, and shrunk away in her clothes somehow, as though she was tryin' to melt away entirely.

"'Look here, my man,' says the constable, 'I'll give you some of these bills. Travelin' about as you do, you may see some one answering the description of this girl. She's wanted pretty bad just now, and the reward is worth working for.'

"With that he goes away. Well, I didn't have time to read the bill just then, but Mrs. Jeakles did, and the minute she read over the description of the woman she declared it was Lydia."

"And I was right," cried Mrs. Jeakles, snapping her fingers.

"Yes," assented the showman, with a deep sigh ; "right for once."

"I had been a havin' dreams and warnin's and forerunners all winter," said Mrs. Jeakles, triumphantly.

"Dang the forerunners," said Jeakles, *sotto voce*.

"But Henery wouldn't listen to 'em," she continued, turning to Wopping; "and see what's come by not paying attention when Providence pints the way for you. We might have had a fortin' then, but for Mr. Jeakles' soft-hearted foolishness."

"And but for what you call soft-hearted foolishness of your husband, an innocent woman would have been murdered by the law," said Wopping, sternly.

"Well, as I say," went on Jeakles, with a flourish of his right arm —his left arm, alas! was still bound with bandages and carried in a sling, being useless for the time—"as I remarked, Lidia seemed to take the alarm, and when Mrs. Jeakles here read the bill to her, and charged her with being the woman described in it, what does she do but fall on her knees and own up right there that she was the woman meant, and beg and plead with us not to denounce her to the officers. I never felt so down in the mouth in my life, gentlemen, as I did to see that poor cretur a takin' on."

"Yes, and he told her she was safe enough for all that he would do towards reporting her," snapped

Mrs. Jeakles, vindictively; "but I did not promise any such nonsense. You may bet your bottom dollar on that."

A curious smile hovered around the ex-showman's lips.

"No," said he, "Sairy Ann was death on Lidia. But Sairy Ann was laid up just at that time with a broken leg; she broke it a few days before a jumping out of the wagin, and she couldn't stir a peg, but she vowed that just as quick as ever she could walk, or find somebody to tell it to, she would tell the story and hand Lidia over to the law; but says I to myself, if Sairy Ann gets ahead of Henery Jeakles in this affair she will first be obliged to find two sound legs to go on, and rise betimes in the morning. I'll leave it to you, gentlemen," appealing successively to the detective and to Wopping, "if I could turn a deaf ear to Lidia's prayers, particularly after doing for us all winter what Lidia had done? No, sir; I could not. I could only think of the time that my little child had died in her arms, and remember that it was her hands that dressed him for his grave; that it was her woice a-prayin' over his little coffin. The bills said that a

woman called Catherine Rokewood was wanted for murder ; that she was an escaped prisoner under sentence of death ; that ten thousand dollars would be paid for her apprehension ; but, dang my jolly eyes, gentlemen, if I could believe our Lidia wuz a murdereress. So that 'ar night when all wuz still and Mrs. Jeakles here a-sleepin' like a infant——”

“ And well I might !” cried Mrs. Jeakles, suddenly. “ I might a slept like seven infants, for you'd fixed my tea with a drug in it as would have put to sleep a whole orfan asylum.”

“ Just a leetle, Sairy Ann,” admitted the showman, apologetically ; “ a very leetle—that is true. I had to do it to keep you quiet. As I was sayin', w'en Mrs. Jeakles was sleepin' sweetly, and everything was quiet, and nobody around but our two selves, then I takes Lidia to one side, an' says I to her : ‘ Look here, my gal, you're in a bad fix, sure enough, and I'd like to help you, for I don't believe you ever killed anybody in your life ; but if you stay with us Sairy Ann is bound to tell on you and give you

away. You must git out of this.’ She sort of wrung her hands. ‘ Oh, God !’ cried she, ‘ where can I go, hunted as I am ?’ and I says, ‘ you must find a place ;’ and, with that, she snatches up her babe an' she says she'll go into the river that wuz a-shinin' in the moonlight a little piece off. I caught her gown.

“ ‘ Don't do that,’ says I, ‘ for be you innocent or guilty, an' innocent I believe you are——.’ ‘ I am, I am,’ says she, crying like her heart was fit to break ; ‘ it is wrong to take one's own life, and you must not do it.’ ‘ I am accursed,’ she cried out, again startin' for the river, ‘ I and my innocent child alike.’ ‘ Be reasonable,’ says I, ‘ be reasonable, and listen to me. Give us the child,’—Mrs. Jeakles had taken a great likin' to it after the death of our own little one, ‘ give us the child—I'll swear to do by her’—it was a girl—‘ as if she wuz our werry own. To be encumbered with the babe is to make capture almost certain, therefore, leave it with us ; you know we treat our children kind, and she'll grow up with us and never know the difference.’ ”

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. JEAKLES CONTINUES.

"LIDIA listened to reason—there weren't anything else she could do just then—an' I divided my money with her——"

"I never knowed that before," cried Sairy Ann, deeply scandalized. "Henery Jeakles you're a wile, deceivin' villain; that's what you air."

"An' I sez to Lidia," went on the showman, calmly, "'you're werry tall for a woman, so supposin' you disguise yourself different from what you have done?' Well, she caught the idee immeejitly. Among my things wuz a little old trunk, which held some clothes as were preshus to me, for the sake of one who had owned 'em once, and who wuz the best and dearest friend I ever had. But this was no time for me to be a nussin' sentimental feelin's for one as wuz dead and gone from a wurruld of trouble, w'en the livin' needed 'em, so I got the little trunk out from the wagin, an' I says to Lydia, 'Don't hesitate nor stop to think long enough to feel shame at what I tell you to do, but

go behind the wagin an' put on the garments in the little trunk that you'll find there.' She did as I told her, and twenty minutes arter, when she came out to me, she wuz that changed that her own mother wouldn't a knowed her. We allus kept a lot of wigs and such make-ups about, and when I had shingled off her hair, and fastened a wig on over the top of her head, she might have escaped detecshun if her worst enemy had stood beside her. Bein' so thin in flesh, and so much taller than ordinary women, gave her an advantage in assumin' the character she had determined to personate, that with a little practice would carry her safely anywhere.

"When it wuz all settled to my satisfaction she accepted the money I offered her—and it was enough to last her until she could find work of some sort—she took a last look at her child and turned to go. I gave her a particular warnin' about her walk and her keeriage, and told her not to stand back, but to go boldly about wher she liked—and coached her on a few other little things, and then she wuz ready to go.

"'Mr. Jeakles, be good to my child,' says she, a chokin' down the sobs in her throat; 'take care

of my child. All I have to leave her is the little necklace around her throat.' She stooped over the babe and lifted the ball that was attached to the chain. 'In this ball,' she says, 'is the certificate of her birth. If the time should ever come when it shall seem necessary for her interests to open the ball and produce the certificate you have only to press a spring on the back of it, like this'—showing me how it was done—'and the ball will open. But, for my sake, for her sake, let her never know the secret, unless it should be necessary to her happiness that she should be told what that paper can tell her.'

"I gave her my solemn promise, gentlemen, and I kept it. To this day I do not know the secret that was hidden there."

"Jeakles works on the principle of being once a fool—allus a fool," said Sairy Ann, crisply.

"Well," said Wopping, "what then?"

"Well, sir, there's preshus little more to tell. As I said before, I gave Lidia a disguise and my money. And she didn't lack for my blessin', either, that night as she went away."

"Then she did go," said the de-

tective, a smile playing about his mouth.

"Lord! I should say so. She kissed that air infant about a thousand times, and a puttin' it down, says she to me, 'Good-bye, Mr. Jeakles. You have been a kind friend to me in my hour of need, and I can never forget you. Oh, be kind to my child! Don't teach her to hate her mother's name, and sometimes let her say a prayer for a poor lost creature like me.' With that she flung up her hands in the moonlight and dropped on the ground. The next minute she had sprung up and fled like a deer down the dusty road.

"From that day to this, over nineteen years, if I count right, I've never seen or heard a word from her."

Mr. Wopping gnashed his teeth in his unbounded disappointment. To be so near and yet so far.

"Is that all?" asked the detective, placidly.

"It is."

"And this comes over nineteen years too late!" cried the attorney.

"Too late, is it?" snorted Sairy Ann. "That's as I expected. Jeakles is allus too late or too early, and allus wuz. It's a trick of his,

and he can't help it, he wuz born so."

"Can't you remember a little more?" cried Wopping. "Try it now, and see."

Mrs. Jeakles shook her head. "He's told all he knows," said she contemptuously, "and that ain't much."

"I'm afraid, Mr. Jeakles," said Captain T., quietly, "that I shall gather in that twenty thousand dollars reward after all."

"And much good may it do you!" snapped Sairy Ann.

"What about the child?" cried the lawyer. "Mr. Jeakles, that forsaken infant is heiress to the Rokewood millions. What became of her, and where is she?"

Unfortunately, Mr. Jeakles, under the combined effect of his wife's reproaches and the lawyer's too-evident disappointment, had lost that amiable temper which seemed to be his chief characteristic.

"Dang my jolly eyes if Jeakles knows or cares!" retorted he, recklessly. "One thing that I do know, Sairy Ann," turning to his wife, "and that is I was a danged fool for ever telling as much as I have told. I can thank you for all of it; yes'm."

"Look here, Mr. Jeakles," cried Wopping, in a conciliating tone, "don't fly off the hooks just at the most interesting part of your story. I've reason to believe you will get the biggest half of the reward yet."

"Dang the reward! Dang the whole danged business!" cried the exshowman, crossly. "But for Sairy Ann I'd never have come here to tell anything. It is the first time that I ever took her adwice, and it is the last time. So, ma'am," savagely now, "make the most of your opportunity."

"Thank you, Henery," said Sairy Ann, with a toss of her bonnet; "I'll do so, and be glad of the chance."

"Mrs. Jeakles," said Wopping, turning to the showman's wife, and speaking in his most persuasive manner, "perhaps you know what became of the child?"

"I do."

"Will you tell me all you know about the little one? A great fortune has fallen to her, and you may command your own price for your information if by it we find a clue to her whereabouts."

"This 'ere 'reward' says that twenty thousand dollars will be paid to any person who can tell you

where that girl is now," said Mrs. Jeakles, smoothing her black-mitten'd fingers ; " and if you say it's a bargain, and can make it further interestin' to me by showin' me the colour of a little money before I begin, why, I'll go on and finish wot Henery commenced."

Wopping laid a hundred-dollar bill upon her lap without a word.

This proceeding having the desired effect in re-establishing Mrs. Jeakles' confidence in the lawyer's honest intentions, and therefore putting her talking member in excellent running order, she presently picked up the story at the point where Mr. Jeakles had paused, and continued :

"As Henery says," she began, "we took Lidia's child as our own, and we had her about four years, or a little over. It wuz in the fall of '60 that she came, and I remember that it was in '65, the last year of the war, that we lost her."

"Lost her!" ejaculated Wopping, in dismay.

"If you will try to remember that only one person can talk when I'm around, and that I'm that privileged indiividul, I'll take it kindly of you," said Sairy Ann, with much asperity.

"Pray, go on."

"If there is anything that spiles a tale, it's the interrupshins, and if you must make remarks, just take the floor now, and make 'em all at onct. After wich I'll kindly try to finish wot I've begun."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Jeakles," said Wopping, greatly vexed at her garrulity. "Go on with your story. I will say no more."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. JEAKLES TALKS.

"As I wuz sayin', we kept that girl until she wuz past four years old. We thought lots of her, and allus treated her exactly as if she wuz really our own child. Her mother had named her Pauline ; but we never called her anything but Pollie."

Mr. Wopping started up suddenly, and as suddenly sat down again, controlling his tongue with an effort.

"And Mr. Jeakles, here," pursued Sairy Ann, apparently unmindful of the lawyer's behaviour, "taught her to ride the ponies and run hurdle races round the ring in great shape. She was a pritty creetur, and werry cute, and as Henery here

allus persisted in dressin' her to look like a wax doll just out of a bandbox of course she allus drawed a crowd wherever we went. I must say that she wuz the best child for the show business we ever had about us, and that's sayin' a great deal. First and last, we've had lots of 'em, but Pollie wuz the cutest and brightest of all. We had pretty hard times after Pollie came to us. The war broke out, and what with a hurryin' here and a scurryin' there to keep out of the way of the armies that wuz eternally fightin' in front of us, or in the rear of us, and the hard times generally, we often went into camp without enough money in our purses to buy a loaf of bread with for the juveniles.

"We kept a-hopin' for better times after the war, which had after a while about come to a focus, and showed signs of endin' soon.

"We had stopped in B——, over in Hereford County, and were calculatin' to stay till matters were decided on somehow, for we'd been all winter in the South, and people were too hard-up and poor to pay for entertainments like ours. When, as we were awaitin', not thinkin' of such a thing as danger, one morning we were surprised by the roar

of cannon, and before we fairly knewed it, we found ourselves right between two armies as were a-shootin' at each other, and a-yellin' and a-screechin' like a million of devils. We couldn't run. There was no place to run to. People were a-flyin' here and a-flyin' there, and a-screechin' and a-prayin', a-fightin' and a-dyin' all around us. Jeakles says, 'For God's sake, Sairy Ann, let's keep the children safe.' The poor things were huddled in a corner of the tent, cryin' as if their hearts would bust, when there came a whistlin' sound over our heads, and Henery, a-lookin' up says, 'Sairy Ann—children—run for your lives,' and he started, and the children after him, and I, too, as fast as I could go. It was awful. The air seemed full of sticks and boards and bricks, and everything you could think of, and a frightful roarin' and screechin' as the shot and shells made about us I never want to hear agin', never!

"Somehow we managed to get into a basement close by, and the children with us. We warn't no sooner there, however, than Henery began to call for Pollie. Says he, 'Mrs. Jeakles, is Pollie safe?' 'Of course she's safe,' says I. 'But I

want to see her,' says he, and he wouldn't be pacified until he could. Then I looked about me for Pollie, and she wasn't there. All the other children were safe and sound, all but Pollie.

"Mr. Jeakles rared like a wild beast, and blamed me for it all ; but that didn't bring her back to us. Just as soon as ever the battle was over Mr. Jeakles insisted on a goin' out to hunt her up. He hadn't been gone ten minutes when he came back a draggin' his leg and a crawlin' along on his stomach like a serpent. A picket had shot him, which he might have expected, prowlin' round as he was tryin' to, in a enemy's country. Well, he couldn't hunt no more for Pollie then, but had to lie quiet until his leg healed again, and it was a deal of a time a doin' it, too.

"During the next day I did what I could to find her ; but what with huntin' a surgin to dress Mr. Jeakles' leg, and a takin' care of the other juveniles, and a doin' all that I had to do for them as wuz with me, I hadn't much chance to look for poor Pollie. Dead men and wounded men and dead horses and wounded horses were piled everywhere, and it made me sick to go a speerin'

about ; but along towards night some men came to where we were, and asked me to go up the street a piece and identify a body. Mr. Jeakles wuz stretched out on some boards with his leg in splinters—he wuz hurt that bad—so I had to go alone. Pretty soon we came to where a child wuz lyin' stripped of all her clothes and a sheet wrapped around her. The face was completely shot away, and there only hung the long golden ringlets by which I could tell the poor little thing wuz our Pollie. I felt bad, and showed it. But the people were kind to us, and helped us to get a coffin for her, and we buried her that afternoon in a corner of the cemetery there, and somehow we've never been so poor since she died but that Mr. Jeakles has spared a little money every spring to send to the sexton to pay him for plantin' violets and daisies on her grave. That, sir, is what become of little Pollie."

The detective was closely watching that silent figure stretched out on the hard office lounge. He saw something that looked like a tear roll its noiseless way down the haggard face and drop unheeded on the floor.

Mrs. Jeakles sighed deeply as she finished her narrative, and pensively

contemplated her black-mittenened fingers, which were folded in her lap.

"It never occurred to you, did it," said Mr. Wopping, "that you might have made a mistake in the identification of that body?"

"It never did."

"It occurred to me," cried the ex-showman, filliping his fingers in his wife's face. "That is wot I allus believed; for why? Because Pollie allus wore her little neck-chain, and that air chain wuz not round the neck of the child we buried—that's why!"

"Some one could have taken it off her before we found the body," said Mrs. Jeakles, angrily. "This is just a dodge of the lawyer's to get rid of payin' me my twenty thousand dollars."

"Indeed, no," protested Mr. Wopping. "The doubt is based on the fact that I know of a young lady whose history seems to be identical with that of the child you lost so strangely."

"I saw her buried with my own eyes," cried Sairy Ann, hysterically. "I've earned that reward, and I want my money."

Captain Turtle now changed his seat to a chair nearer the great book

case in whose friendly shade was concealed the poor worn creature he had so closely hunted.

"I am sure that you think you saw her buried," said Wopping; "and at the same time I am equally certain that you are mistaken in thinking that child was the child called Pollie. I want to ask Mr. Jeakles here if he supposes it would be possible, after this length of time, for him to identify that necklace and its ornament?"

"Certingly," cried the ex-showman; "certingly, I could identify it. Wot's to hinder me? I would only like the chance to, that's all."

"You shall have that opportunity," said Wopping, hastily.

He went to a private drawer and took therefrom the chain and filbert ornament Miss Wardlaw had given him.

"Look here, Mr. Jeakles," said Wopping, putting the chain down on the table before the showman, "and tell me if you ever have seen this before?"

Mr. Jeakles examined it carefully before he said a word.

"Well," he cried, "if I've seen this thing once I've seen it a hundred times. It is the werry identical chain wot Lidia put round

Pollie's neck the night she went away. I'll take my oath to that, sir, and it's the werry identical chain wot Pollie had on the night that we lost her, I'm danged if it isn't."

"To put the matter beyond the possibility of a mistake, Mr. Jeakles, suppose that you now discover the secret of the golden filbert," said Wopping.

"Werry well, sir, I'll do it."

Mr. Jeakles took the ornament in his hand and pressed firmly against its outer edge.

The ball opened slowly ; a closely rolled paper dropped out.

Mr. Wopping picked it up and unrolled it.

It was what he had expected it would be—a scrap torn from a leaf of a prison register, on which was recorded the birth of Catherine Rokewood's child.

There was no doubt remaining in his mind now that Miss Pollie Wardlaw was the heiress to the Rokewood millions. In endeavouring to establish a pedigree for that young lady he had succeeded beyond his wildest expectations ; and in finding that pedigree he had, at the same time, discovered the lost heir for whom he was seeking. He was jubilant.

CHAPTER XXV

THE DETECTIVE SHOWS HIS HAND.

"MRS. JEAKLES," cried the lawyer, "I have no hesitation in saying that I believe the twenty thousand dollars are yours."

The showman's wife gave a cry of delight.

"What did I allus tell you, Henery?" turning to her husband. " Didn't I allus say there was a forchin in it?"

"I object," said the detective, quietly.

"What!" ejaculated Wopping.

"I object to having the reward given to Mrs. Jeakles, on the ground that she hasn't earned it."

"Not earned it," cried Sairy Ann ; " who has, then, if I hain't?"

"If I understand it rightly, the reward is offered for information that will lead to a discovery of Catherine Rokewood and her child. Am I right?"

"Yes," said Wopping, reluctantly, "it is."

"Well, Mrs. Jeakles here has only given information of the child —information which even you seem to doubt the correctness of."

"I saw her buried with my own eyes," repeated Sairy Ann, hysterically; "I've earned that reward, and I want my money."

"True; I do," admitted Wopping, hastily. "I know that the child called Pollie is not dead. In less than twenty-four hours I can produce her here."

"You are not mistaken?"

"Indeed, no."

"In such an event Mrs. Jeakles is not entitled to more than half. If you have discovered the girl you are the one to take a share of the reward."

"I'll waive my rights," said Wopping, hastily. "Though her information is erroneous on one point, viz., the death and burial of Pollie, yet but for Mrs. Jeakles' testimony I could not have made the discovery which I have made."

"You are a vile cheat, Captain Turtle. You are tryin' to get it all yourself," said Sairy Ann.

"On the contrary, I'll propose that we go halves in the reward—you and I. If you have succeeded in satisfying Mr. Wopping about the child I'll engage to produce the missing mother."

The motionless figure on the lounge now essayed to rise, and

reached out a trembling hand to the attorney, as if seeking his help and protection. The detective walked hastily to the windows and threw open the shutters, letting a flood of sunlight into the darkened room.

"What do you mean?" cried the lawyer.

"I mean to claim that reward, and to show you that I have fairly earned it," said the Captain. "You must have had a parcel of fools on this case heretofore, Mr. Wopping, for they have let the game slip through their fingers unsuspected, when all the while it was under their very noses. I mean that last night I saw in the vaults of Rokewood Chapel the face and form of Catherine Rokewood. I was not frightened like poor old Marley, and I followed that face and that figure until I ran her to her lair."

"Captain Turtle," ejaculated the amazed attorney.

"Wait one moment, Mr. Wopping," cried the detective; "I have a few words to say to Mr. Jeakles here, after which my interest in this case ceases for ever."

"Werry well, sir," cried the showman, "say 'em."

"I want you to let your memory turn back over a period of twenty

years, and let it find a recollection of a man called Matthew Bane."

"Wich is easy," said Mr. Jeakles.

"That man in '59 left San Francisco in company with a cousin of his, who was a showman."

"Yes," admitted Mr. Jeakles, uneasily.

"He was in ill-health, and a cripple from rheumatism?"

"Yes, sir."

"He—died."

"Wich I hopes you have no seris objekshinto, since you never knowed him," said the showman, blithely.

"Certainly not," returned the detective, calmly; "but you spoke awhile ago of having given the contents of a certain little trunk to Catherine Rokewood, and of coaching her in a character she was to assume."

"And whose bizness is it if I did, I'd like to know?" retorted the showman, surlily.

"That's all right, Mr. Jeakles. In the little trunk whose contents you turned over for her disposal was something besides clothing. There were diaries, letters of reference, etc., were there not?"

"There might have been," was the guarded response.

"Mr. Jeakles, what was the character you advised Catherine Rokewood to assume?"

The jolly showman whipped quickly about in his chair, and putting his thumb to his nose twiddled his fingers suggestively at the detective.

"If I wuz Sairy Ann," cried he, provokingly, "I'd soon tell all I know; but I ain't, and Mr. Jeakles, sir, is sellybrated for keepin' his mouth shut."

"Yes, it's allus Sairy Ann," sighed that poor female martyr. "Sairy Ann has to ketch it."

"You need not reply if you choose not to do so. I can answer for you. I have found out for myself, and further concealment is useless," said Captain Turtle, firmly. "I now declare that the man whom we know as Matthew Bane is not the real Matthew Bane. The man who now hides his identity under the shelter of that name—the man who calls himself Matthew Bane—is not a man at all, but Catherine Rokewood in disguise."

A sharp cry burst from the Nobody's white lips. He sprang up as though he had been stung into new life. For a moment his tottering figure swayed in the sunlight,

and then fell a senseless object to the floor.

The little showman gave one scared glance as that tottering figure rose up before him.

“Good Lord!” he ejaculated, “done for, after all.” And then he huddled closer in his chair, as if he dared not look again.

The Captain sprang forward and lifted the inanimate body.

“You have killed him,” cried Mr. Wopping, angrily.

“Her, you should have said,” cried the detective, tearing off the wig and glasses. “I tell you I am right. This is Catherine Rokewood.”

“It’s Lidia!” screamed Mrs. Jeakles, as she glanced at the death-white face of the woman she had hated. “Look a here, Henery; here’s the poor thing herself. Oh, dear me! That Chicago detective will get the reward after all.”

“Mrs. Jeakles,” cried Captain Turtle, sternly, “this is not the time to talk of rewards. Let a feeling of womanly pity for this unfortunate creature stir your bosom for a moment.”

“Give the poor thing a drop of brandy,” cried the showman.

Mr. Wopping wiped away the

bloody froth that oozed from Catherine’s white, cold lips.

He was shocked, amazed at the strange *dénouement*. There under his very eyes she had lived and suffered for years. Tears stood thickly in his eyes as he recognized in this poor wreck before him the semblance of one he had known in her brighter and happier days.

Catherine opened her eyes. For a moment she looked in a bewildered way at the strange faces about her, and put her hand to her head.

The hideous wig was gone.

In an instant it all came back to her, and she realized what had happened. She motioned Wopping to come closer.

“Hunted down,” she whispered in a broken voice. “Hunted down, at last.”

“Not hunted down, Catherine,” said the lawyer, gently; “not hunted down, but *found*. Found that your innocence may be declared; that your good name may be restored; that you may renew your life in your child’s future!”

“Child!” uttered Catherine, turning her face to the wall, “my lost, forsaken child.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER MANY YEARS.

"Go for a physician at once," said Wopping, in a low voice, to the detective; "Dr. Barnes has an office on the first floor, second door to the right. It is early, but I think he will be in. Bring him quickly."

The Captain immediately left the room.

"Oh, Catherine! why did you not tell me long ago who you were? How much suffering might have been spared you!" said Mr. Wopping.

"How could I," she said, in a far-off whisper, "hunted as I have been? There was no one I dared trust with my secret."

She made a gesture towards her throat.

"Never!" cried Wopping, as he divined her meaning, "never! Let that terrible fear depart for ever. Your innocence is established at last."

"Hunted for twenty years!" she said, in a faint voice, that was growing fainter still; "hunted for twenty years—how terrible my life has been!"

"If I had only known—if I had only but suspected your identity," groaned the old attorney; "but I never did."

"No," she returned; "how could you? It is better so."

"To think that no one suspected you," continued Wopping, "and it all seems so plain to me now. Perhaps the very fact of your being here—the place of all places which we naturally supposed would be the one that you would avoid—preserved your secret better."

"I could not stay away." Her voice was broken, and so low and faint that the lawyer bent his ear to catch the words. "Something impelled me to return, and once here I could not go. Besides, I was really safer here than anywhere else. I came almost directly from Mr. Jeakles' tent to the situation which I held so long with Fielding & Co. The letters of reference which Mr. Jeakles had given me, with the garments of his dead cousin, seemed the place for me—and I felt safe. The sky-parlour became my home. Here I could know at once every move that Rokewood made against me. I had access to your papers, and you were my friend. There was never a new move made by Roke-

wood that I did not know it at once. I was ever on my guard. Ah me!"—she threw her hands wildly above her head—"the daily terror, the hourly fear that made existence a torture to me. Can I forget, can I ever forgive, that dead one for the vengeance he has visited upon me? He has crushed my heart and ruined my life."

"Let it pass," said Wopping, gently.

"Pass," she muttered. "Pass! When I looked down upon his dead face, as he lay in his coffin at Rokewood; when, later on, from my shadowed corner in the Rokewood vaults, I saw him laid side by side with the ones, already dead and gone; when I heard them say, 'earth to earth and dust to dust,' the voiceless cry of my broken heart went up to God with a prayer that the shadows might be dissolved."

"They are lifting, they are breaking, Catherine," said the attorney; "a glad new morning dawns for you at last."

There was no response.

The whispering voice had grown faint, and fainter still, and finally ceased. She had relapsed into unconsciousness.

Assisted by the showman's wife, the attorney carried the insensible woman up into the bleak sky-parlour and laid her upon the poor small bed.

"Mrs. Jeakles," said Wopping, "make out a list of such articles as you see are needed here. I will order them; let the list include everything necessary to the comfort of this poor creature, and spare no expense. Make out your order *carte blanche*."

There was a tap on the door. The physician stood there.

He walked immediately to the bedside.

"Is there any hope?" asked Wopping, anxiously, as he bent over her.

The physician shook his head. "None whatever."

"If money can save her," said the attorney in a voice that shook with emotion, "she shall be saved."

"I understood you to ask for my professional opinion," returned the Doctor, gravely.

"I did—I do."

"And I gave it. Money can do nothing here, except to make the road to death a trifle easier."

"It is too late?"

"Too late!" said the physician with grave compassion.

Mr. Wopping was silent. He turned away to a darkened corner, and was there weeping the bitterest tears he had ever shed.

"I will say this much," said the physician, as he dropped the wrist he had taken up. "It is barely possible that she may rally—and, under favourable circumstances, live for a time. But as for ultimate recovery, there is absolutely no hope at all. It seems to be a case where long-continued privation has been succeeded by some sudden mental shock, which must, in my opinion, have a fatal ending. If she has relatives or friends whom it would be necessary to notify, they should be sent for without delay. I apprehend the very worst."

Mr. Wopping took out his notebook from his breast-pocket and hastily wrote a note on one of its leaves. It was directed to Miss Wardlaw:

"Come at once. Let nothing delay you. Your mother is found and is dying. Make haste.

"WOPPING."

CHAPTER XXVII.

REUNITED.

VARIOUS reasons—the chief one being, however, a desire to maintain a somewhat closer proximity to the object of his heart's best affections—had caused Mr. Teddy Bellew to journey to Old Point Comfort, and there take up his residence in the great hotel by the sea. Mr. Bellew, like the obliging gentleman and the obedient son that he was, had started some time previous on that little tour which his father had directed for him.

But, wholly unsuspected by the worthy banker, this tour had been of extremely short duration, and only covered over that particular strip of country which lay between Villa Hampton and Old Point Comfort, a distance of something less than two hundred miles.

As a matter of fact, Bellew, Sr., had purchased a ticket and started his heir in an entirely different direction. The son had clasped his parent's hand affectionately, and bidding him a cheerful farewell, had departed, only to slyly switch off at a station not far down the road, and

thereafter to pursue his journey according to his own inclinations.

This being the case, in the natural course of events, Mr. Bellew, Jr., had brought up not long after at Old Point Comfort and had taken up his residence on the seashore.

From this vantage point Mr. Bellew found it convenient to sally out and pay court to his dear girl at such times as he could find her without the accompanying spectre of the irascible Miss Pennyfeather and the equally irascible and detestable pug. The watchful Teddy had long since discovered that Miss Pollie was an early riser, and invariably rose in time for a morning ramble on the beach hours before her amiable mistress had any idea of leaving her couch.

As the beloved Fido was not permitted to leave his place on the foot of Miss Pennyfeather's bed until Miss Pennyfeather herself should disturb his soft repose, Pollie was thus enabled to have a short time every morning that she could call her own.

Mr. Bellew having found this out for himself, it had afforded him much satisfaction to now rise himself betimes and join Miss Pollie in

her early stroll. This being the state of affairs, it was no wonder that Mr. Wopping's telegram had found the lovers together one cool morning in the week of what fate had decreed should be Miss Wardlaw's last term of servitude.

“Telegrams always startle one so,” said Pollie, as she received the yellow missive from the messenger. “I’m afraid of them, and it always shocks me, somehow, when I receive one.”

“Yes,” assented Bellew, negligently, digging his slender rattan into the sand as she tore off the envelope. “Things done by electricity naturally will be shocking, dear.”

Miss Pollie gave a cry—

“Teddy!”

Miss Wardlaw was quite white, and the hand that held the yellow missive trembled violently.

“Read this; it is from Mr. Wopping. Something has happened.”

He took it from her hand.

“I should say so,” said he, as he rapidly glanced down the page; “and Heaven knows that I’m glad of it. I tell you, Pollie, this cuts the Pennyfeather question right in two. No more Pennyfeathers, no more pug dogs for Miss Pollie Wardlaw.”

"I must go."

"Of course you must go, and at once. The train leaves in half an hour. Gather up your traps. I'll see they are taken to the station, and I'll see you safe to your journey's end. I am interested in this, you know. Wopping is a stunning old chap, isn't he? I felt sure he would succeed with your case if he undertook it. Remember, love, our wedding-day is now set. I appoint it to be six weeks from this morning."

* * * *

Mr. Wopping himself met them on their arrival.

"Let me congratulate you, my young friend," said he, clasping Miss Pollie's hand.

"It is a matter for congratulation, then," said Pollie, hysterically. "Oh, you never can know the terrible things I have imagined about it since I received your message."

"You have come into a great fortune—very great. It makes you one of the richest women in America."

"She will be wanting to throw me over now," cried Bellew, tragically.

"No, no," cried Pollie, laughing and crying at the same time; "for richer, for poorer, we pledged ourselves, did we not?"

"For richer for poorer, for better for worse; put it all in, Pollie," urged Bellew.

"Your message said that I have a mother," said Pollie, in a low voice; "is it true?"

"It is."

"Where is she now?"

"Ill, too ill, I fear, to ever recover."

"Let me go to her," cried Miss Wardlaw, eagerly.

"Before you can see her there is a tale to be told you," said the lawyer, sadly; "a recital that cannot help but be a painful one to you as well as to me."

Mr. Wopping took them directly to his office. The little showman sat there, his big, red head dropping forward on his bosom, and his eyes apparently fast closed in slumber.

"Mr. Jeakles!" ejaculated Pollie in surprise.

"Wich it is," cried he, bouncing up suddenly, and skipping towards her; "dang my jolly eyes! I wuz right arter all, Miss Pollie. You air the same little dimpled, witched creetur that I thought wuz dead and buried and gone to heaven long ago. How de—how de do?"

"Mr. Jeakles is one of your

...

earliest and oldest friends, Miss Pollie," said the lawyer.

"Then it was through Mr. Jeakles, after all, that you succeeded in tracing up her pedigree," cried Teddy, amazed.

"Yes. Let me introduce Miss Pollie to you in her proper character—as Miss Pauline Rokewood——"

"Of Rokewood?" gasped the bewildered Teddy.

"Of Rokewood!" said Wopping, calmly, "and the undisputed heiress to nearly five millions of money. Your father may well congratulate his son on the brilliant match you have made."

"I don't remember that I instructed you to find a fortune for this young lady; that would sink my prospects into insignificance in comparison with hers," said Bellew, disconsolately.

"If I read Miss Rokewood rightly, Teddy, this great fortune will not separate you."

"Indeed, no," cried Pollie, hastily, going to her lover's side; "don't you remember the pledge, Teddy?—for richer for poorer? Oh, I am so glad it is really for better and not for worse that you will take me. Congratulate me, Teddy, dear."

"I'm danged if I don't think as it's the gentleman wot should be congratulated," remarked Mr. Jeakles, jamming his fists into his pockets, and straddling wide his stumpy legs. "Any fellow wot wins a girl like our Pollie for his wife is to be congratulated, if she didn't have a penny to bless herself with."

"As the poet says, 'them's my sentiments,' Mr. Jeakles," said Teddy, grasping the showman's hand, "and because you've been a friend of Pollie's, I say, here's luck to you."

"Wich bein' of warious sorts, pr'haps you'll kindly single out the one you're wishin' me, and say if it's good luck or the conterwerry," said Mr. Jeakles. "I'm danged if I want any more of the bad, if it's all the same to you."

"The very best of luck, sir," laughed Bellew; "the best by all means."

"Wich air accepted with delight," said the showman, joyously.

Mr. Wopping brought out the necklace and gave it to Pollie.

"In this golden ball," said he, "was hidden the clue to your identity. But it was unsuspected by me, and would have remained

so but for Mr. Jeakles, who told me its history and showed me its secret."

The lawyer sat down, and, taking her hand in his, began, gently, the story of her mother's life.

Long ere he had finished the tale Miss Rokewood had bent forward and covered her face with her hands.

Tears fell thick and fast from the daughter's eyes as she listened to the story of that shadowed and hunted life. What were all the riches of earth in comparison with the wrong that had been done to her mother?

"Take me to her," she said, as at last the lawyer ceased speaking. "She must live--she shall live to see happiness yet."

"Come with me," said Wopping; "she is prepared for you, and is expecting you now."

He led her to the door of the humble sky-parlour, and, waiting till it opened and closed upon her receding figure, went softly and silently away, leaving them, as we leave them now, to each other.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CONCLUSION.

A MONTH had gone by since the scenes recorded in our last chapter.

Captain Turtle and the showman's wife had arrived at an amicable understanding over the payment of the great reward.

They agreed that it should be divided equally between them. Accordingly the detective had received ten thousand dollars as his share of it, and, expressing himself satisfied thereat, had returned to his home in the city by the great lake.

Mrs. Jeakles, still having a fancy for theatricals, had taken her share and set out with the avowed intention of buying seven more educated and valuable mules with which to start her husband up anew in the show business.

In the interim Mr. Jeakles consented to remain with Miss Pollie, acting in the self-constituted character of guardian, friend and general adviser for that young lady.

Mr. Bellew, Sr., had deemed it wiser to exchange his views of certain matters, and accordingly hastened to pay a formal call upon his

son's *fiancée*. He assured her he was overjoyed to hear of her great good fortune, and he congratulated her upon the change in her affairs. He hoped she would pardon him for certain utterances of his which had characterized their former interview long ago. The feelings of a parent who was naturally desirous of promoting his child's best interests had actuated him then, and must be his excuse now, he said. However, all objections to his son's union with her being now happily removed from his mind, he hinted delicately that he hoped Miss Pollie would not permit any unpleasant recollections of former words of his to prejudice her against a favourable answer to his son's suit. For himself, he was anxious to assure her that Teddy's choice received his unqualified approval, and he stood ready to receive her at any moment as a daughter of his house.

"Mercenary creature!" thought Polly, as she watched the carriage roll away that held the pompous man who now aspired to be her father-in-law; "poor, mercenary old man! you are detestable, and only to be endured for poor Teddy's sake."

Even the odious Mr. Bolton had

found it necessary to make a humble apology for the rudeness of his former epistle to the poor Nobody.

"What a prodigious power there is in money!" mused Miss Pollie, as one by one these evidences of her changed social position were presented for her consideration.

"I am no prettier, no more accomplished, and certainly no better than I was six weeks ago. Yet here, in the short space of six weeks, I find myself weighted down with the attentions of people whom I care nothing for. Because I am richer in silver and gold, in bonds and mortgages, in houses and lands, I am therefore worthier, in the estimation of a sordid world. I wonder if it is always so?"

By slow and easy stages Catherine had been conveyed to her old childhood's home—The Willows—where, surrounded by every luxury that wealth could buy, and ministered to by gentle hands, she slowly rallied from the shock that had so nearly killed her, and came back for a time to life and to love.

Mr. Wopping had lost no time in procuring for her all the reparation which the law could give her.

He had gone to the Governor, backed up with the physician's

statement and the old servant's testimony ; and, acquainting that official with the facts of the case, had received what he had craved in the shape of a certain legal document stamped with the great seal, and signed with the Governor's name.

It was a pardon for a crime she had not committed. Can there be a greater travesty on justice than that ?

However, this being all the law could do towards redressing the great wrong it had done her, she was glad to accept it, and did accept it, with a thankful heart.

The ruined life, the years of agony, could not be changed or undone. They must remain as ever-present memories while she lived ; and she did live.

As if to illustrate the fallibility of the medical opinion, and entirely contrary to Dr. Barnes's predictions, and much to his surprise, Catherine had gradually improved in health.

The greatest physicians in the land had been summoned in consultation over her case, and while they all agreed that she could never be well again, they said that a sea voyage and a prolonged residence under milder skies would do much

to benefit her. In Italy she might find renewed health and prolonged life, and it was determined that she should go.

This naturally necessitated the appointment of an early date for the marriage of the lovers, much to Teddy's secret satisfaction.

Pollie begged for a quiet wedding, but Catherine herself objected to this. "No," said she, laying her hand on her daughter's head, "no more quiet marriages here. The great mistake of my life was a secret marriage. How different this world would have been to me but for that private and secret marriage ! Put on your bridal bravery, my child, and go up to the altar in the face of the whole world, if it chooses to look on. But do not slip away secretly, and unknown to your friends assume those obligations which so change a woman's whole life. Do all that can be done to make your wedding-day one that will be happily remembered."

So one bright morning, in gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls, Pollie had gone to church, and priest and bishop had united in tying the knot which gave her to Teddy for ever.

Mr. Wopping had given away the bride, and later, at the wedding breakfast which followed at Rokewood, had toasted the young pair, and amid the congratulations and good wishes of the thousands of friends who had flocked about them, the party had gone down to the

steamer which was to bear them away.

As the sun had risen and thrown a broad red track across the rolling water, the ship had gone her way down the radiant round-out into the broader light of a new-born day.

THE END.

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